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THE TALES OF CHEKHOV

THE LADY WITH THE DOG

AND OTHER STORIES

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THE LADY WITH THE DOG

AND OTHER STORIES

ANTON CHEKHOV

FROM THE RUSSIAN

By CONSTANCE GARNETT

WILLEY BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, April, 1917.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Lady with the Dog	3
A Doctor's Visit	31
An Upheaval	51
Ionitch	65
The Head of the Family	95
The Black Monk	103
Volodya	155
An Anonymous Story	177
The Husband	293

(This only covers ½ of book) * see p. 3

Студентка - 169

THE LADY WITH THE DOG

nd

THE TALES OF CHEKHOV

THE LADY WITH THE DOG

I

It was said that a new person had appeared on the sea-front: a lady with a little dog. Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, who had by then been a fortnight at Yalta, and so was fairly at home there, had begun to take an interest in new arrivals. Sitting in Verney's pavilion, he saw, walking on the sea-front, a fair-haired young lady of medium height, wearing a *béret*; a white Pomeranian dog was running behind her.

And afterwards he met her in the public gardens and in the square several times a day. She was walking alone, always wearing the same *béret*, and always with the same white dog; no one knew who she was, and every one called her simply "the lady with the dog."

"If she is here alone without a husband or friends, it wouldn't be amiss to make her acquaintance," Gurov reflected.

He was under forty, but he had a daughter already twelve years old, and two sons at school. He had been married young, when he was a student in his second year, and by now his wife seemed

as old again as he. She was a tall, erect
an with dark eyebrows, staid and dignified,
as she said of herself, intellectual. She read
eat deal, used phonetic spelling, called her hus-
l, not Dmitri, but Dimitri, and he secretly con-
ed her unintelligent, narrow, inelegant, was
id of her, and did not like to be at home. He
begun being unfaithful to her long ago — had
unfaithful to her often, and, probably on that
unt, almost always spoke ill of women, and
n they were talked about in his presence, used
ll them " the lower race."

seemed to him that he had been so schooled
itter experience that he might call them what
ked, and yet he could not get on for two days

problem of extreme intricacy, and in the long run the situation becomes unbearable. But at every fresh meeting with an interesting woman this experience seemed to slip out of his memory, and he was eager for life, and everything seemed simple and amusing.

One evening he was dining in the gardens, and the lady in the *béret* came up slowly to take the next table. Her expression, her gait, her dress, and the way she did her hair told him that she was a lady, that she was married, that she was in Yalta for the first time and alone, and that she was dull there. . . . The stories told of the immorality in such places as Yalta are to a great extent untrue; he despised them, and knew that such stories were for the most part made up by persons who would themselves have been glad to sin if they had been able; but when the lady sat down at the next table three paces from him, he remembered these tales of easy conquests, of trips to the mountains, and the tempting thought of a swift, fleeting love affair, a romance with an unknown woman, whose name he did not know, suddenly took possession of him.

He beckoned coaxingly to the Pomeranian, and when the dog came up to him he shook his finger at it. The Pomeranian growled: Gurov shook his finger at it again.

The lady looked at him and at once dropped her eyes.

"He doesn't bite," she said, and blushed.

"May I give him a bone?" he asked; and when

she nodded he asked courteously, "Have you be
long in Yalta?"

"Five days."

"And I have already dragged out a fortnig
here."

There was a brief silence.

"Time goes fast, and yet it is so dull here!
she said, not looking at him.

"That's only the fashion to say it is dull he
A provincial will live in Belyov or Zhidra and n
be dull, and when he comes here it's 'Oh, the d
ness! Oh, the dust!' One would think he ca
from Grenada."

She laughed. Then both continued eating
silence, like strangers, but after dinner they walk
side by side; and there sprang up between them t

not sure whether her husband had a post in a Crown Department or under the Provincial Council — and was amused by her own ignorance. And Gurov learnt, too, that she was called Anna Sergeyevna.

Afterwards he thought about her in his room at the hotel — thought she would certainly meet him next day; it would be sure to happen. As he got into bed he thought how lately she had been a girl at school, doing lessons like his own daughter; he recalled the diffidence, the angularity, that was still manifest in her laugh and her manner of talking with a stranger. This must have been the first time in her life she had been alone in surroundings in which she was followed, looked at, and spoken to merely from a secret motive which she could hardly fail to guess. He recalled her slender, delicate neck, her lovely grey eyes.

"There's something pathetic about her, anyway," he thought, and fell asleep.

II

A week had passed since they had made acquaintance. It was a holiday. It was sultry indoors, while in the street the wind whirled the dust round and round, and blew people's hats off. It was a thirsty day, and Gurov often went into the pavilion, and pressed Anna Sergeyevna to have syrup and water or an ice. One did not know what to do with oneself.

In the evening when the wind had dropped a little, they went out on the groyne to see the steamer

e in. There were a great many people walking
ıt the harbour; they had gathered to welcome
e one, bringing bouquets. And two peculiari-
of a well-dressed Yalta crowd were very con-
ıous: the elderly ladies were dressed like young
, and there were great numbers of generals.
wing to the roughness of the sea, the steamer
ved late, after the sun had set, and it was a
time turning about before it reached the groyne.
a Sergeyevna looked through her lorgnette at
steamer and the passengers as though looking
acquaintances, and when she turned to Gurov
eyes were shining. She talked a great deal and
d disconnected questions, forgetting next mo-
t what she had asked; then she dropped her
nette in the crush.

"Let us go to your hotel," he said softly. And both walked quickly.

The room was close and smelt of the scent she had bought at the Japanese shop. Gurov looked at her and thought: "What different people one meets in the world!" From the past he preserved memories of careless, good-natured women, who loved cheerfully and were grateful to him for the happiness he gave them, however brief it might be; and of women like his wife who loved without any genuine feeling, with superfluous phrases, affectedly, hysterically, with an expression that suggested that it was not love nor passion, but something more significant; and of two or three others, very beautiful, cold women, on whose faces he had caught a glimpse of a rapacious expression — an obstinate desire to snatch from life more than it could give, and these were capricious, unreflecting, domineering, unintelligent women not in their first youth, and when Gurov grew cold to them their beauty excited his hatred, and the lace on their linen seemed to him like scales.

But in this case there was still the diffidence, the angularity of inexperienced youth, an awkward feeling; and there was a sense of consternation as though some one had suddenly knocked at the door. The attitude of Anna Sergeyevna — "the lady with the dog" — to what had happened was somehow peculiar, very grave, as though it were her fall — so it seemed, and it was strange and inappropriate. Her face dropped and faded, and on both sides of it her long hair hung down mournfully; she mused

... a slice and began eatin
There followed at least half an l

Anna Sergeyevna was touching
her the purity of a good, simple
seen little of life. The solitary c
the table threw a faint light on he
clear that she was very unhappy.

"How could I despise you?
"You don't know what you are sa

"God forgive me," she said, an
with tears. "It's awful."

"You seem to feel you need to

"Forgiven? No. I am a bad,
despise myself and don't attempt t
It's not my husband but myself I
And not only just now; I have been
for a long time. My husband m
honest man, but he is a flunkey!
what he does there, what his work
he is a flunkey! I was twenty wher
to him. I have been tormented
wanted something better. 'There
ferent sort of life,' I said to mysel
live! To live, to live!

husband I was ill, and came here. . . . And here I have been walking about as though I were dazed, like a mad creature; . . . and now I have become a vulgar, contemptible woman whom any one may despise."

Gurov felt bored already, listening to her. He was irritated by the naïve tone, by this remorse, so unexpected and inopportune; but for the tears in her eyes, he might have thought she was jesting or playing a part.

"I don't understand," he said softly. "What is it you want?"

She hid her face on his breast and pressed close to him.

"Believe me, believe me, I beseech you . . ." she said. "I love a pure, honest life, and sin is loathsome to me. I don't know what I am doing. Simple people say: 'The Evil One has beguiled me.' And I may say of myself now that the Evil One has beguiled me."

"Hush, hush! . . ." he muttered.

He looked at her fixed, scared eyes, kissed her, talked softly and affectionately, and by degrees she was comforted, and her gaiety returned; they both began laughing.

Afterwards when they went out there was not a soul on the sea-front. The town with its cypresses had quite a deathlike air, but the sea still broke noisily on the shore; a single barge was rocking on the waves, and a lantern was blinking sleepily on it.

They found a cab and drove to Oreanda.

church, looked down at the sea, and
Yalta was hardly visible through the n
white clouds stood motionless on the n
The leaves did not stir on the trees,
chirruped, and the monotonous hollc
the sea rising up from below, spoke of
the eternal sleep awaiting us. So it
sounded when there was no Yalta, no O
so it sounds now, and it will sound as
and monotonously when we are all no
in this constancy, in this complete in
the life and death of each of us, there l
haps, a pledge of our eternal salvation
ceasing movement of life upon earth, (
progress towards perfection. Sitting
young woman who in the dawn seeme
soothed and spellbound in these magic
ngs — the sea, mountains, clouds, the
Gurov thought how in reality everything
n this world when one reflects: everyt
what we think or do ourselves when we
human dignity and the higher aims o
nce.

a steamer come from Theodosia, with its lights out in the glow of dawn.

"There is dew on the grass," said Anna Sergeyevna, after a silence.

"Yes. It's time to go home."

They went back to the town.

Then they met every day at twelve o'clock on the sea-front, lunched and dined together, went for walks, admired the sea. She complained that she slept badly, that her heart throbbed violently; asked the same questions, troubled now by jealousy and now by the fear that he did not respect her sufficiently. And often in the square or gardens, when there was no one near them, he suddenly drew her to him and kissed her passionately. Complete idleness, these kisses in broad daylight while he looked round in dread of some one's seeing them, the heat, the smell of the sea, and the continual passing to and fro before him of idle, well-dressed, well-fed people, made a new man of him; he told Anna Sergeyevna how beautiful she was, how fascinating. He was impatiently passionate, he would not move a step away from her, while she was often pensive and continually urged him to confess that he did not respect her, did not love her in the least, and thought of her as nothing but a common woman. Rather late almost every evening they drove somewhere out of town, to Oreanda or to the waterfall; and the expedition was always a success, the scenery invariably impressed them as grand and beautiful.

They were expecting her husband to come, but a letter came from him, saying that there was some-

g wrong with his eyes, and he entreated his wife
ome home as quickly as possible. Anna Ser-
vna made haste to go.

It's a good thing I am going away," she said to
ov. " It's the finger of destiny! "

e went by coach and he went with her. They
driving the whole day. When she had got
a compartment of the express, and when the
nd bell had rung, she said:

Let me look at you once more . . . look at you
again. That's right."

e did not shed tears, but was so sad that she
ed ill, and her face was quivering.

I shall remember you . . . think of you," she
" God be with you; be happy. Don't remem-
evil against me. We are parting forever — it

him; he was genuinely warm and affectionate with her, but yet in his manner, his tone, and his caresses there had been a shade of light irony, the coarse condescension of a happy man who was, besides, almost twice her age. All the time she had called him kind, exceptional, lofty; obviously he had seemed to her different from what he really was, so he had unintentionally deceived her. . . .

Here at the station was already a scent of autumn; it was a cold evening.

"It's time for me to go north," thought Gurov as he left the platform. "High time!"

III

At home in Moscow everything was in its winter routine; the stoves were heated, and in the morning it was still dark when the children were having breakfast and getting ready for school, and the nurse would light the lamp for a short time. The frosts had begun already. When the first snow has fallen, on the first day of sledge-driving it is pleasant to see the white earth, the white roofs, to draw soft, delicious breath, and the season brings back the days of one's youth. The old limes and birches, white with hoar-frost, have a good-natured expression; they are nearer to one's heart than cypresses and palms, and near them one doesn't want to be thinking of the sea and the mountains.

Gurov was Moscow born; he arrived in Moscow on a fine frosty day, and when he put on his fur coat and warm gloves, and walked along Petrovka,

when on Saturday evening he heard the ringing
e bells, his recent trip and the places he had seen
all charm for him. Little by little he became
rbed in Moscow life, greedily read three news-
rs a day, and declared he did not read the Mos-
papers on principle! He already felt a longing
o to restaurants, clubs, dinner-parties, anniver-
celebrations, and he felt flattered at entertaining
nguished lawyers and artists, and at playing
with a professor at the doctors' club. He
already eat a whole plateful of salt fish and
age. . . .

another month, he fancied, the image of Anna
eyevna would be shrouded in a mist in his mem-
and only from time to time would visit him in

evna did not visit him in dreams, but followed him about everywhere like a shadow and haunted him. When he shut his eyes he saw her as though she were living before him, and she seemed to him lovelier, younger, tenderer than she was; and he imagined himself finer than he had been in Yalta. In the evenings she peeped out at him from the bookcase, from the fireplace, from the corner — he heard her breathing, the caressing rustle of her dress. In the street he watched the women, looking for some one like her.

He was tormented by an intense desire to confide his memories to some one. But in his home it was impossible to talk of his love, and he had no one outside; he could not talk to his tenants nor to any one at the bank. And what had he to talk of? Had he been in love, then? Had there been anything beautiful, poetical, or edifying or simply interesting in his relations with Anna Sergeyevna? And there was nothing for him but to talk vaguely of love, of woman, and no one guessed what it meant; only his wife twitched her black eyebrows, and said: "The part of a lady-killer does not suit you at all, Dimitri."

One evening, coming out of the doctors' club with an official with whom he had been playing cards, he could not resist saying:

"If only you knew what a fascinating woman I made the acquaintance of in Yalta!"

The official got into his sledge and was driving away, but turned suddenly and shouted:

"Dmitri Dmitritch!"

hat?"

ou were right this evening: the sturgeon was a
strong!"

se words, so ordinary, for some reason moved
to indignation, and struck him as degrading
nclean. What savage manners, what people!
senseless nights, what uninteresting, uneventys! The rage for card-playing, the gluttony,
unkenness, the continual talk always about the
hing. Useless pursuits and conversations albout the same things absorb the better part of
ime, the better part of one's strength, and in
d there is left a life grovelling and curtailed,
ess and trivial, and there is no escaping or
away from it — just as though one were in
house or a prison.

inkstand, grey with dust and adorned with a figure on horseback, with its hat in its hand and its head broken off. The hotel porter gave him the necessary information; Von Diderits lived in a house of his own in Old Gontcharny Street — it was not far from the hotel: he was rich and lived in good style, and had his own horses; every one in the town knew him. The porter pronounced the name " Dridirits."

Gurov went without haste to Old Gontcharny Street and found the house. Just opposite the house stretched a long grey fence adorned with nails.

" One would run away from a fence like that," thought Gurov, looking from the fence to the windows of the house and back again.

He considered: to-day was a holiday, and the husband would probably be at home. And in any case it would be tactless to go into the house and upset her. If he were to send her a note it might fall into her husband's hands, and then it might ruin everything. The best thing was to trust to chance. And he kept walking up and down the street by the fence, waiting for the chance. He saw a beggar go in at the gate and dogs fly at him; then an hour later he heard a piano, and the sounds were faint and indistinct. Probably it was Anna Sergeyevna playing. The front door suddenly opened, and an old woman came out, followed by the familiar white Pomeranian. Gurov was on the point of calling to the dog, but his heart began beating violently, and in his excitement he could not remember the dog's name.

He walked up and down, and loathed the grey fence more and more, and by now he thought irri-

to his hotel room and sat for a lon
sofa, not knowing what to do, then
and a long nap.

" How stupid and worrying it is
when he woke and looked at the da
was already evening. " Here I've h
for some reason. What shall I do

He sat on the bed, which was cov
grey blanket, such as one sees in hc
taunted himself in his vexation:

" So much for the lady with the do
for the adventure. . . . You're in a

That morning at the station a pos
ters had caught his eye. " The Gei
performed for the first time. He
and went to the theatre.

" It's quite possible she may go t
formance," he thought.

The theatre was full. As in all
tres, there was a fog above the cha
lery was noisy and restless; in the fro
dandies were standing up before the
performance, with their hands behi

tuning up; the stage curtain swayed. All the time the audience were coming in and taking their seats Gurov looked at them eagerly.

Anna Sergeyevna, too, came in. She sat down in the third row, and when Gurov looked at her his heart contracted, and he understood clearly that for him there was in the whole world no creature so near, so precious, and so important to him; she, this little woman, in no way remarkable, lost in a provincial crowd, with a vulgar lorgnette in her hand, filled his whole life now, was his sorrow and his joy, the one happiness that he now desired for himself, and to the sounds of the inferior orchestra, of the wretched provincial violins, he thought how lovely she was. He thought and dreamed.

A young man with small side-whiskers, tall and stooping, came in with Anna Sergeyevna and sat down beside her; he bent his head at every step and seemed to be continually bowing. Most likely this was the husband whom at Yalta, in a rush of bitter feeling, she had called a flunkey. And there really was in his long figure, his side-whiskers, and the small bald patch on his head, something of the flunkey's obsequiousness; his smile was sugary, and in his buttonhole there was some badge of distinction like the number on a waiter.

During the first interval the husband went away to smoke; she remained alone in her stall. Gurov, who was sitting in the stalls, too, went up to her and said in a trembling voice, with a forced smile:

"Good-evening."

She glanced at him and turned pale, then glanced

down beside her. The violins and the f
tuning up. He felt suddenly frightened:
as though all the people in the boxes were
them. She got up and went quickly to th
followed her, and both walked senselessly
sages, and up and down stairs, and figur
scholastic, and civil service uniforms, a
badges, flitted before their eyes. Th
glimpses of ladies, of fur coats hangin
the draughts blew on them, bringing a sm
tobacco. And Gurov, whose heart was b
lently, thought:

"Oh, heavens! Why are these peopl
this orchestra! . . ."

And at that instant he recalled how w
seen Anna Sergeyevna off at the stati
thought that everything was over and
never meet again. But how far they wer
the end!

On the narrow, gloomy staircase over
written "To the Amphitheatre," she sto

"How you have frightened me!" she s
ing hard, still pale and overwhelmed.

he said hastily in a low voice. "I entreat you to understand. . . ."

She looked at him with dread, with entreaty, with love; she looked at him intently, to keep his features more distinctly in her memory.

"I am so unhappy," she went on, not heeding him. "I have thought of nothing but you all the time; I live only in the thought of you. And I wanted to forget, to forget you; but why, oh, why, have you come?"

On the landing above them two schoolboys were smoking and looking down, but that was nothing to Gurov; he drew Anna Sergeyevna to him, and began kissing her face, her cheeks, and her hands.

"What are you doing, what are you doing!" she cried in horror, pushing him away. "We are mad. Go away to-day; go away at once. . . . I beseech you by all that is sacred, I implore you. . . . There are people coming this way!"

Some one was coming up the stairs.

"You must go away," Anna Sergeyevna went on in a whisper. "Do you hear, Dmitri Dmitritch? I will come and see you in Moscow. I have never been happy; I am miserable now, and I never, never shall be happy, never! Don't make me suffer still more! I swear I'll come to Moscow. But now let us part. My precious, good, dear one, we must part!"

She pressed his hand and began rapidly going downstairs, looking round at him, and from her eyes he could see that she really was unhappy. Gurov

Moscow. Once in two or three mo
S——, telling her husband that she was
sult a doctor about an internal complai
husband believed her, and did not beli
Moscow she stayed at the Slaviansky I
and at once sent a man in a red ca
Gurov went to see her, and no one in M
of it.

Once he was going to see her in this v
ter morning (the messenger had come
before when he was out). With him
daughter, whom he wanted to take to s
on the way. Snow was falling in big w

"It's three degrees above freezing-p
it is snowing," said Gurov to his daugh
thaw is only on the surface of the ea
quite a different temperature at a grea
the atmosphere."

"And why are there no thunderst
winter, father?"

He explained that, too. He talked,
the while that he was going to see *her,* a
soul knew of it, and probably never v

and acquaintances; and another life running its course in secret. And through some strange, perhaps accidental, conjunction of circumstances, everything that was essential, of interest and of value to him, everything in which he was sincere and did not deceive himself, everything that made the kernel of his life, was hidden from other people; and all that was false in him, the sheath in which he hid himself to conceal the truth — such, for instance, as his work in the bank, his discussions at the club, his "lower race," his presence with his wife at anniversary festivities — all that was open. And he judged of others by himself, not believing in what he saw, and always believing that every man had his real, most interesting life under the cover of secrecy and under the cover of night. All personal life rested on secrecy, and possibly it was partly on that account that civilised man was so nervously anxious that personal privacy should be respected.

After leaving his daughter at school, Gurov went on to the Slaviansky Bazaar. He took off his fur coat below, went upstairs, and softly knocked at the door. Anna Sergeyevna, wearing his favourite grey dress, exhausted by the journey and the suspense, had been expecting him since the evening before. She was pale; she looked at him, and did not smile, and he had hardly come in when she fell on his breast. Their kiss was slow and prolonged, as though they had not met for two years.

"Well, how are you getting on there?" he asked.

"What news?"

"Wait; I'll tell you directly. . . . I can't talk."

him, and while he drank his tea she rema
ing at the window with her back to him
crying from emotion, from the miserable
ness that their life was so hard for them;
only meet in secret, hiding themselves fr
like thieves! Was not their life shattere

"Come, do stop!" he said.

It was evident to him that this love of tl
not soon be over, that he could not see
it. Anna Sergeyevna grew more and mo
to him. She adored him, and it was untl
say to her that it was bound to have an
day; besides, she would not have believed

He went up to her and took her by the
to say something affectionate and cheerii
that moment he saw himself in the lookin

His hair was already beginning to
And it seemed strange to him that he had
much older, so much plainer during the
years. The shoulders on which his ha
were warm and quivering. He felt comp
his life, still so warm and lovely, but pr
ready not far from beginning to fade and

ated by their imagination, whom they had been eagerly seeking all their lives; and afterwards, when they noticed their mistake, they loved him all the same. And not one of them had been happy with him. Time passed, he had made their acquaintance, got on with them, parted, but he had never once loved; it was anything you like, but not love.

And only now when his head was grey he had fallen properly, really in love — for the first time in his life.

Anna Sergeyevna and he loved each other like people very close and akin, like husband and wife, like tender friends; it seemed to them that fate itself had meant them for one another, and they could not understand why he had a wife and she a husband; and it was as though they were a pair of birds of passage, caught and forced to live in different cages. They forgave each other for what they were ashamed of in their past, they forgave everything in the present, and felt that this love of theirs had changed them both.

In moments of depression in the past he had comforted himself with any arguments that came into his mind, but now he no longer cared for arguments; he felt profound compassion, he wanted to be sincere and tender. . . .

"Don't cry, my darling," he said. "You've had your cry; that's enough. . . . Let us talk now, let us think of some plan."

Then they spent a long while taking counsel together, talked of how to avoid the necessity for secrecy, for deception, for living in different towns

and not seeing each other for long at a time. could they be free from this intolerable bonc

"How? How?" he asked, clutching his "How?"

And it seemed as though in a little whil solution would be found, and then a new and s did life would begin; and it was clear to bo them that they had still a long, long road b them, and that the most complicated and di part of it was only just beginning.

A DOCTOR'S VISIT

A DOCTOR'S VISIT

THE Professor received a telegram from the Lyalikovs' factory; he was asked to come as quickly as possible. The daughter of some Madame Lyalikov, apparently the owner of the factory, was ill, and that was all that one could make out of the long, incoherent telegram. And the Professor did not go himself, but sent instead his assistant, Korolyov.

It was two stations from Moscow, and there was a drive of three miles from the station. A carriage with three horses had been sent to the station to meet Korolyov; the coachman wore a hat with a peacock's feather on it, and answered every question in a loud voice like a soldier: "No, sir!" "Certainly, sir!"

It was Saturday evening; the sun was setting, the workpeople were coming in crowds from the factory to the station, and they bowed to the carriage in which Korolyov was driving. And he was charmed with the evening, the farmhouses and villas on the road, and the birch-trees, and the quiet atmosphere all around, when the fields and woods and the sun seemed preparing, like the workpeople now on the eve of the holiday, to rest, and perhaps to pray. . . .

He was born and had grown up in Moscow; he did not know the country, and he had never taken

outside, but within there was always su
penetrable ignorance and dull egoism
of the owners, wearisome, unhealthy toil
of the workpeople, squabbling, vern
And now when the workpeople timidly
fully made way for the carriage, in their
caps, their walk, he read physical impu
nness, nervous exhaustion, bewildermen

They drove in at the factory gates
ide he caught glimpses of the little hou
people, of the faces of women, of quil
n the railings. "Look out!" shoutec
nan, not pulling up the horses. It
ourtyard without grass, with five imm
f buildings with tall chimneys a little
rom another, warehouses and barrack
verything a sort of grey powder as tl
lust. Here and there, like oases in
here were pitiful gardens, and the gre
oofs of the houses in which the manager
ived. The coachman suddenly pulled up
nd the carriage stopped at the house,
een newly painted grey; here was a flo
vith a lilac bush covered with dust.

in the passage and the entry, and at the same time he heard sighs and whisperings. "Pray walk in. . . . We've been expecting you so long . . . we're in real trouble. Here, this way."

Madame Lyalikov — a stout elderly lady wearing a black silk dress with fashionable sleeves, but, judging from her face, a simple uneducated woman — looked at the doctor in a flutter, and could not bring herself to hold out her hand to him; she did not dare. Beside her stood a personage with short hair and a pince-nez; she was wearing a blouse of many colours, and was very thin and no longer young. The servants called her Christina Dmitryevna, and Korolyov guessed that this was the governess. Probably, as the person of most education in the house, she had been charged to meet and receive the doctor, for she began immediately, in great haste, stating the causes of the illness, giving trivial and tiresome details, but without saying who was ill or what was the matter.

The doctor and the governess were sitting talking while the lady of the house stood motionless at the door, waiting. From the conversation Korolyov learned that the patient was Madame Lyalikov's only daughter and heiress, a girl of twenty, called Liza; she had been ill for a long time, and had consulted various doctors, and the previous night she had suffered till morning from such violent palpitations of the heart, that no one in the house had slept, and they had been afraid she might die.

"She has been, one may say, ailing from a child," said Christina Dmitryevna in a sing-song voice, con-

big and tall, but ugly like her mother, little eyes and disproportionate breadt part of the face, lying with her hai muffled up to the chin, she made upo the first minute the impression of a p creature, sheltered and cared for here and he could hardly believe that this w of the five huge buildings.

"I am the doctor come to see you, yov. "Good evening."

He mentioned his name and press a large, cold, ugly hand; she sat up, a accustomed to doctors, let herself be s out showing the least concern that h and chest were uncovered.

"I have palpitations of the heart "It was so awful all night. . . . I of fright! Do give me something."

"I will, I will; don't worry yoursel

Korolyov examined her and sh shoulders.

"The heart is all right," he said; " on satisfactorily; everything is in Your nerves must have been playing p

room. The patient screwed up her eyes at the light, then suddenly put her hands to her head and broke into sobs. And the impression of a destitute, ugly creature vanished, and Korolyov no longer noticed the little eyes or the heavy development of the lower part of the face. He saw a soft, suffering expression which was intelligent and touching: she seemed to him altogether graceful, feminine, and simple; and he longed to soothe her, not with drugs, not with advice, but with simple, kindly words. Her mother put her arms round her head and hugged her. What despair, what grief was in the old woman's face! She, her mother, had reared her and brought her up, spared nothing, and devoted her whole life to having her daughter taught French, dancing, music: had engaged a dozen teachers for her; had consulted the best doctors, kept a governess. And now she could not make out the reason of these tears, why there was all this misery, she could not understand, and was bewildered; and she had a guilty, agitated, despairing expression, as though she had omitted something very important, had left something undone, had neglected to call in somebody — and whom, she did not know.

"Lizanka, you are crying again . . . again," she said, hugging her daughter to her. "My own, my darling, my child, tell me what it is! Have pity on me! Tell me."

Both wept bitterly. Korolyov sat down on the side of the bed and took Liza's hand.

"Come, give over; it's no use crying," he said kindly. "Why, there is nothing in the world that

vorse. I should have thought that if
ınything for the heart it ought to be
forget the name. . . . Convallaria, is
And there followed all sorts of detai
errupted the doctor, preventing his sp
here was a look of effort on her face
he supposed that, as the woman of mo
n the house, she was duty bound to kee
'ersation with the doctor, and on no o
ıut medicine.
Korolyov felt bored.
"I find nothing special the matter,"
lressing the mother as he went out of tl
' If your daughter is being attended by
loctor, let him go on attending her.
nent so far has been perfectly correct, a
'eason for changing your doctor. W
t's such an ordinary trouble; there's n
ıusly wrong."
He spoke deliberately as he put on
vhile Madame Lyalikov stood without r
ooked at him with her tearful eyes.
"I have half an hour to catch the

to trouble you, but if you would be so good. . . . For God's sake," she went on in an undertone, glancing towards the door, "do stay to-night with us! She is all I have . . . my only daughter. . . . She frightened me last night; I can't get over it. . . . Don't go away, for goodness' sake! . . ."

He wanted to tell her that he had a great deal of work in Moscow, that his family were expecting him home; it was disagreeable to him to spend the evening and the whole night in a strange house quite needlessly; but he looked at her face, heaved a sigh, and began taking off his gloves without a word.

All the lamps and candles were lighted in his honour in the drawing-room and the dining-room. He sat down at the piano and began turning over the music. Then he looked at the pictures on the walls, at the portraits. The pictures, oil-paintings in gold frames, were views of the Crimea — a stormy sea with a ship, a Catholic monk with a wine-glass; they were all dull, smooth daubs, with no trace of talent in them. There was not a single good-looking face among the portraits, nothing but broad cheekbones and astonished-looking eyes. Lyalikov, Liza's father, had a low forehead and a self-satisfied expression; his uniform sat like a sack on his bulky plebeian figure; on his breast was a medal and a Red Cross Badge. There was little sign of culture, and the luxury was senseless and haphazard, and was as ill fitting as that uniform. The floors irritated him with their brilliant polish, the lustres on the chandelier irritated him, and he was reminded for some reason of the story of the

tand now; they roused strange, unplea
n his soul.

"I believe nothing would induce me
ıere to live . . ." he thought, and went
nusic-books again.

"Doctor, please come to supper!" th
alled him in a low voice.

He went into supper. The table wa
aid with a vast number of dishes and
here were only two to supper: himself
ina Dmitryevna. She drank Madeira,
.nd talked, looking at him through hei

"Our workpeople are very contented.
ıerformances at the factory every winter
ıeople act themselves. They have lect
nagic lantern, a splendid tea-room, and
hey want. They are very much atta
.nd when they heard that Lizanka was
ıad a service sung for her. Though th
ducation, they have their feelings, too."

"It looks as though you have no man
t all," said Korolyov.

"Not one. Pyotr Nikanoritch died

been living with them for eleven years — as one of the family."

At supper they served sterlet, chicken rissoles, and stewed fruit; the wines were expensive French wines.

"Please don't stand on ceremony, doctor," said Christina Dmitryevna, eating and wiping her mouth with her fist, and it was evident she found her life here exceedingly pleasant. "Please have some more."

After supper the doctor was shown to his room, where a bed had been made up for him, but he did not feel sleepy. The room was stuffy and it smelt of paint; he put on his coat and went out.

It was cool in the open air; there was already a glimmer of dawn, and all the five blocks of buildings, with their tall chimneys, barracks, and warehouses, were distinctly outlined against the damp air. As it was a holiday, they were not working, and the windows were dark, and in only one of the buildings was there a furnace burning; two windows were crimson, and fire mixed with smoke came from time to time from the chimney. Far away beyond the yard the frogs were croaking and the nightingales singing.

Looking at the factory buildings and the barracks, where the workpeople were asleep, he thought again what he always thought when he saw a factory. They may have performances for the workpeople, magic lanterns, factory doctors, and improvements of all sorts, but, all the same, the workpeople he had met that day on his way from

was incomprehensible and incurable, he
factories as something baffling, the cau
also was obscure and not removable,
improvements in the life of the factor
looked upon not as superfluous, but as
with the treatment of incurable illnesses.

"There is something baffling in it, of c
he thought, looking at the crimson
'Fifteen hundred or two thousand wor
working without rest in unhealthy su
making bad cotton goods, living on th
starvation, and only waking from this n
rare intervals in the tavern; a hundred
s overseers, and the whole life of th
s spent in imposing fines, in abuse, in in
nly two or three so-called owners enjoy
hough they don't work at all, and
retched cotton. But what are the profit
o they enjoy them? Madame Lyalik
aughter are unhappy — it makes one v
ook at them; the only one who enjoys
hristina Dmitryevna, a stupid, middle-a
dy in pince-nez. And so it appears th
re blocks of buildings are at work

Suddenly there came a strange noise, the same sound Korolyov had heard before supper. Some one was striking on a sheet of metal near one of the buildings; he struck a note, and then at once checked the vibrations, so that short, abrupt, discordant sounds were produced, rather like "Dair . . . dair . . . dair. . . ." Then there was half a minute of stillness, and from another building there came sounds equally abrupt and unpleasant, lower bass notes: "Drin . . . drin . . . drin. . . ." Eleven times. Evidently it was the watchman striking the hour.

Near the third building he heard: "Zhuk . . . zhuk . . . zhuk. . . ." And so near all the buildings, and then behind the barracks and beyond the gates. And in the stillness of the night it seemed as though these sounds were uttered by a monster with crimson eyes — the devil himself, who controlled the owners and the work-people alike, and was deceiving both.

Korolyov went out of the yard into the open country.

"Who goes there?" some one called to him at the gates in an abrupt voice.

"It's just like being in prison," he thought, and made no answer.

Here the nightingales and the frogs could be heard more distinctly, and one could feel it was a night in May. From the station came the noise of a train; somewhere in the distance drowsy cocks were crowing; but, all the same, the night was still, the world was sleeping tranquilly. In a field not

er gratification. But that's only app
; only the figurehead. The real person
verything is being done, is the devil."

And he thought about the devil, in wl
ot believe, and he looked round at the tv
'here the fires were gleaming. It seer
ıat out of those crimson eyes the devil l
)oking at him — that unknown force
:eated the mutual relation of the stro
'eak, that coarse blunder which one c
)rrect. The strong must hinder the
ving — such was the law of Nature; l
newspaper article or in a school boo
ıtelligible and easily accepted. In the
'hich was everyday life, in the tangle of
ut of which human relations were wover
)nger a law, but a logical absurdity,
'rong and the weak were both equally
ıeir mutual relations, unwillingly sub
)me directing force, unknown, standi
fe, apart from man.

So thought Korolyov, sitting on the p
ttle by little he was possessed by a f

not a soul anywhere near, as though everything were dead, the five buildings and their chimneys against the grey background of the dawn had a peculiar look — not the same as by day; one forgot altogether that inside there were steam motors, electricity, telephones, and kept thinking of lake-dwellings, of the Stone Age, feeling the presence of a crude, unconscious force. . . .

And again there came the sound: "Dair . . . dair . . . dair . . . dair . . ." twelve times. Then there was stillness, stillness for half a minute, and at the other end of the yard there rang out.

"Drin . . . drin . . . drin. . . ."

"Horribly disagreeable," thought Korolyov.

"Zhuk . . . zhuk . . ." there resounded from a third place, abruptly, sharply, as though with annoyance — "Zhuk . . . zhuk. . . ."

And it took four minutes to strike twelve. Then there was a hush; and again it seemed as though everything were dead.

Korolyov sat a little longer, then went to the house, but sat up for a good while longer. In the adjoining rooms there was whispering, there was a sound of shuffling slippers and bare feet.

"Is she having another attack?" thought Korolyov.

He went out to have a look at the patient. By now it was quite light in the rooms, and a faint glimmer of sunlight, piercing through the morning mist, quivered on the floor and on the wall of the drawing-room. The door of Liza's room was open, and she was sitting in a low chair beside her

" You are not asleep," he said. " weather outside. It's spring. The are singing, and you sit in the dark something."

She listened and looked into his fa were sorrowful and intelligent, and it she wanted to say something to him.

" Does this happen to you often? " I

She moved her lips, and answered:

" Often, I feel wretched almost eve

At that moment the watchman in th striking two o'clock. They heard: dair . . ." and she shuddered.

" Do those knockings worry you? "

" I don't know. Everything here she answered, and pondered. " Every me. I hear sympathy in your voice; me as soon as I saw you that I coul about it."

" Tell me, I beg you."

" I want to tell you of my opinion. me that I have no illness, but that I a frightened, because it is bound to be s

about under his window. I am constantly being doctored," she went on, looking at her knees, and she gave a shy smile. "I am very grateful, of course, and I do not deny that the treatment is a benefit; but I should like to talk, not with a doctor, but with some intimate friend who would understand me and would convince me that I was right or wrong."

"Have you no friends?" asked Korolyov.

"I am lonely. I have a mother; I love her, but, all the same, I am lonely. That's how it happens to be. . . . Lonely people read a great deal, but say little and hear little. Life for them is mysterious; they are mystics and often see the devil where he is not. Lermontov's Tamara was lonely and she saw the devil."

"Do you read a great deal?"

"Yes. You see, my whole time is free from morning till night. I read by day, and by night my head is empty; instead of thoughts there are shadows in it."

"Do you see anything at night?" asked Korolyov.

"No, but I feel. . . ."

She smiled again, raised her eyes to the doctor, and looked at him so sorrowfully, so intelligently; and it seemed to him that she trusted him, and that she wanted to speak frankly to him, and that she thought the same as he did. But she was silent, perhaps waiting for him to speak.

And he knew what to say to her. It was clear to him that she needed as quickly as possible to give

e five buildings and the million if she had it —
ve that devil that looked out at night; it was
to him, too, that she thought so herself, and
nly waiting for some one she trusted to confirm

t he did not know how to say it. How?
s shy of asking men under sentence what they
been sentenced for; and in the same way it
kward to ask very rich people what they want
ch money for, why they make such a poor use
eir wealth, why they don't give it up, even
they see in it their unhappiness; and if they
a conversation about it themselves, it is usually
rrassing, awkward, and long.
How is one to say it?" Korolyov wondered.
l is it necessary to speak?"
d he said what he meant in a roundabout way:

us. Life will be good in fifty years' time; it's only a pity we shall not last out till then. It would be interesting to have a peep at it."

"What will our children and grandchildren do?" asked Liza.

"I don't know. . . . I suppose they will throw it all up and go away."

"Go where?"

"Where? . . . Why, where they like," said Korolyov; and he laughed. "There are lots of places a good, intelligent person can go to."

He glanced at his watch.

"The sun has risen, though," he said. "It is time you were asleep. Undress and sleep soundly. Very glad to have made your acquaintance," he went on, pressing her hand. "You are a good, interesting woman. Good-night!"

He went to his room and went to bed.

In the morning when the carriage was brought round they all came out on to the steps to see him off. Liza, pale and exhausted, was in a white dress as though for a holiday, with a flower in her hair; she looked at him, as yesterday, sorrowfully and intelligently, smiled and talked, and all with an expression as though she wanted to tell him something special, important — him alone. They could hear the larks trilling and the church bells pealing. The windows in the factory buildings were sparkling gaily, and, driving across the yard and afterwards along the road to the station, Korolyov thought neither of the workpeople nor of lake dwellings, nor of the devil, but thought of the time, perhaps close

at hand, when life would be as bright and jo as that still Sunday morning; and he thought pleasant it was on such a morning in the sprin drive with three horses in a good carriage, to bask in the sunshine.

AN UPHEAVAL

AN UPHEAVAL

MASHENKA PAVLETSKY, a young girl who had ~~only~~ just finished her studies at a boarding school, returning from a walk to the house of the Kushkins, with whom she was living as a governess, found the household in a terrible turmoil. ~~Mihailo~~, the porter who opened the door to her, was excited and red as a crab.

Loud voices were heard from upstairs.

"Madame Kushkin is in a fit, most likely, or else she has quarrelled with her husband," thought Mashenka.

In the hall and in the corridor she met maid-servants. One of them was crying. Then Mashenka saw, running out of her room, the master of the house himself, Nikolay Sergeitch, a little man with a flabby face and a bald head, though he was not old. He was red in the face and twitching all over. He passed the governess without noticing her, and throwing up his arms, exclaimed:

"Oh, how horrible it is! How tactless! How stupid! How barbarous! Abominable!"

Mashenka went into her room, and then, for the first time in her life, it was her lot to experience in all its acuteness the feeling that is so familiar to persons in dependent positions, who eat the bread of the rich and powerful, and cannot speak their

. There was a search going on in her room. ıdy of the house, Fedosya Vassilyevna, a stout, -shouldered, uncouth woman with thick black ows, a faintly perceptible moustache, and red who was exactly like a plain, illiterate cook e and manners, was standing, without her cap the table, putting back into Mashenka's work- alls of wool, scraps of materials, and bits of . . . Evidently the governess's arrival took surprise, since, on looking round and seeing rl's pale and astonished face, she was a little aback, and muttered:

ardon. I . . . I upset it accidentally. . . . eeve caught in it. . . ."

saying something more, Madame Kushkin

but it was not in the same order as Mashenka had left it when she went out. So the search had been thorough, most thorough. But what was it for? Why? What had happened? Mashenka remembered the excited porter, the general turmoil which was still going on, the weeping servant-girl; had it not all some connection with the search that had just been made in her room? Was not she mixed up in something dreadful? Mashenka turned pale, and feeling cold all over, sank on to her linen-basket.

A maid-servant came into the room.

"Liza, you don't know why they have been rummaging in my room?" the governess asked her.

"Mistress has lost a brooch worth two thousand," said Liza.

"Yes, but why have they been rummaging in my room?"

"They've been searching every one, miss. They've searched all my things, too. They stripped us all naked and searched us. . . God knows, miss, I never went near her toilet-table, let alone touching the brooch. I shall say the same at the police-station."

"But . . . why have they been rummaging here?" the governess still wondered.

"A brooch has been stolen, I tell you. The mistress has been rummaging in everything with her own hands. She even searched Mihailo, the porter, herself. It's a perfect disgrace! Nikolay Sergeitch simply looks on and cackles like a hen. But you've no need to tremble like that, miss. They

nothing here. You've nothing to be afraid
you didn't take the brooch."
ut, Liza, it's vile . . . it's insulting," said
enka, breathless with indignation. "It's so
so low! What right had she to suspect me
o rummage in my things?"
ou are living with strangers, miss," sighed
"Though you are a young lady, still you
. . as it were . . . a servant. . . . It's not
ving with your papa and mamma."
shenka threw herself on the bed and sobbed
y. Never in her life had she been subjected
h an outrage, never had she been so deeply
d. . . . She, well-educated, refined, the
ter of a teacher, was suspected of theft; she
een searched like a street-walker! She could
agine a greater insult. And to this feeling

them, I will take an oath. . . . They will believe that I could not be a thief!"

Mashenka remembered that under the sheets in her basket she had some sweetmeats, which, following the habits of her schooldays, she had put in her pocket at dinner and carried off to her room. She felt hot all over, and was ashamed at the thought that her little secret was known to the lady of the house; and all this terror, shame, resentment, brought on an attack of palpitation of the heart, which set up a throbbing in her temples, in her heart, and deep down in her stomach.

"Dinner is ready," the servant summoned Mashenka.

"~~Shall I go, or not?~~"

Mashenka brushed her hair, wiped her face with a wet towel, and went into the dining-room. There they had already begun dinner. At one end of the table sat Fedosya Vassilyevna with a stupid, solemn, serious face; at the other end Nikolay Sergeitch. At the sides there were the visitors and the children. The dishes were handed by two footmen in swallow-tails and white gloves. Every one knew that there was an upset in the house, that Madame Kushkin was in trouble, and every one was silent. Nothing was heard but the sound of munching and the rattle of spoons on the plates.

The lady of the house, herself, was the first to speak.

"What is the third course?" she asked the footman ~~in a weary, injured voice.~~

"*Esturgeon à la russe,*" ~~answered the footman.~~

with tears.

"Come, don't let us agitate oursel
kov, her household doctor, observed i
voice, just touching her arm, with a smil
"We are nervous enough as it is. I
the brooch! Health is worth more th
sand roubles!"

"It's not the two thousand I regre
the lady, and a big tear rolled dow
"It's the fact itself that revolts me!
up with thieves in my house. I don't
I regret nothing; but to steal from m
gratitude! That's how they repay
kindness. . . ."

They all looked into their plates, bu
fancied after the lady's words that ev
looking at her. A lump rose in her
began crying and put her handkerchief

"*Pardon,*" she muttered. "I ca
My head aches. I'll go away."

And she got up from the table, s
chair awkwardly, and went out quickl
overcome with confusion.

"I don't say she took the brooch," said Fedosya Vassilyevna, "but can you answer for her? To tell the truth, I haven't much confidence in these learned paupers."

"It really was unsuitable, Fenya. . . . Excuse me, Fenya, but you've no kind of legal right to make a search."

"I know nothing about your laws. All I know is that I've lost my brooch. And I will find the brooch!" She brought her fork down on the plate with a clatter, and her eyes flashed angrily. "And you eat your dinner, and don't interfere in what doesn't concern you!"

Nikolay Sergeitch dropped his eyes mildly and sighed. Meanwhile Mashenka, reaching her room, flung herself on her bed. She felt now neither alarm nor shame, but she felt an intense longing to go and slap the cheeks of this hard, arrogant, dull-witted, prosperous woman.

Lying on her bed she breathed into her pillow and dreamed of how nice it would be to go and buy the most expensive brooch and fling it into the face of this bullying woman. If only it were God's will that Fedosya Vassilyevna should come to ruin and wander about begging, and should taste all the horrors of poverty and dependence, and that Mashenka, whom she had insulted, might give her alms! Oh, if only she could come in for a big fortune, could buy a carriage, and could drive noisily past the windows so as to be envied by that woman!

But all these were only dreams, in reality there was only one thing left to do — to get away as

y as possible, not to stay another hour in this
It was true it was terrible to lose her place,
back to her parents, who had nothing; but
could she do? Mashenka could not bear the
of the lady of the house nor of her little room;
lt stifled and wretched here. She was so dis-
l with Fedosya Vassilyevna, who was so
ed by her illnesses and her supposed aristo-
rank, that everything in the world seemed to
become coarse and unattractive because this
n was living in it. Mashenka jumped up
the bed and began packing.

May I come in?" asked Nikolay Sergeitch at
or; he had come up noiselessly to the door,
oke in a soft, subdued voice. "May I?"

ome in."

"I understand, of course, but you must make allowances. You know my wife is nervous, headstrong; you mustn't judge her too harshly."

Mashenka did not speak.

"If you are so offended," Nikolay Sergeitch went on, "well, if you like, I'm ready to apologise. I ask your pardon."

Mashenka made no answer, but only bent lower over her box. This exhausted, irresolute man was of absolutely no significance in the household. He stood in the pitiful position of a dependent and hanger-on, even with the servants, and his apology meant nothing either.

"H'm! . . . You say nothing! That's not enough for you. In that case, I will apologise for my wife. In my wife's name. . . . She behaved tactlessly, I admit it as a gentleman. . . ."

Nikolay Sergeitch walked about the room, heaved a sigh, and went on:

"Then you want me to have it rankling here, under my heart. . . . You want my conscience to torment me. . . ."

"I know it's not your fault, Nikolay Sergeitch," said Mashenka, looking him full in the face with her big tear-stained eyes. "Why should you worry yourself?"

"Of course, no. . . . But still, don't you . . . go away. I entreat you."

Mashenka shook her head. Nikolay Sergeitch stopped at the window and drummed on the pane with his finger-tips.

"Such misunderstandings are simply torture to

he said. "Why, do you want me to go down
ny knees to you, or what? Your pride is
ded, and here you've been crying and packing
go; but I have pride, too, and you do not spare
Or do you want me to tell you what I would not
s Confession? Do you? Listen; you want me
l you what I won't tell the priest on my death-
"

ashenka made no answer.
took my wife's brooch," Nikolay Sergeitch said
ly. "Is that enough now? Are you satisfied?
I . . . took it. . . . But, of course, I count on
discretion. . . . For God's sake, not a word,
alf a hint to any one!"
ashenka, amazed and frightened, went on pack-
she snatched her things, crumpled them up, and

"No!" said Mashenka resolutely, beginning to tremble. "Let me alone, I entreat you!"

"Well, God bless you!" sighed Nikolay Sergeitch, sitting down on the stool near the box. "I must own I like people who still can feel resentment, contempt, and so on. I could sit here forever and look at your indignant face. . . . So you won't stay, then? I understand. . . . It's bound to be so. . . . Yes, of course. . . . It's all right for you, but for me — wo-o-o-o! . . . I can't stir a step out of this cellar. I'd go off to one of our estates, but in every one of them there are some of my wife's rascals . . . stewards, experts, damn them all! They mortgage and remortgage. . . . You mustn't catch fish, must keep off the grass, mustn't break the trees."

"Nikolay Sergeitch!" his wife's voice called from the drawing-room. "Agnia, call your master!"

"Then you won't stay?" asked Nikolay Sergeitch, getting up quickly and going towards the door. "You might as well stay, really. In the evenings I could come and have a talk with you. Eh? Stay! If you go, there won't be a human face left in the house. It's awful!"

Nikolay Sergeitch's pale, exhausted face besought her, but Mashenka shook her head, and with a wave of his hand he went out.

Half an hour later she was on her way.

IONITCH

IONITCH

I

WHEN visitors to the provincial town S—— complained of the dreariness and monotony of life, the inhabitants of the town, as though defending themselves, declared that it was very nice in S——, that there was a library, a theatre, a club; that they had balls; and, finally, that there were clever, agreeable, and interesting families with whom one could make acquaintance. And they used to point to the family of the Turkins as the most highly cultivated and talented.

This family lived in their own house in the principal street, near the Governor's. Ivan Petrovitch Turkin himself — a stout, handsome, dark man with whiskers — used to get up amateur performances for benevolent objects, and used to take the part of an elderly general and cough very amusingly. He knew a number of anecdotes, charades, proverbs, and was fond of being humorous and witty, and he always wore an expression from which it was impossible to tell whether he were joking or in earnest. His wife, Vera Iosifovna — a thin, nice-looking lady who wore a pince-nez — used to write novels and stories, and was very fond of reading them aloud to her visitors. The daughter, Ekaterina Ivanovna, a

g girl, used to play on the piano. In short, member of the family had a special talent. Turkins welcomed visitors, and good-humour- displayed their talents with genuine simplicity. stone house was roomy and cool in summer; of the windows looked into a shady old garden, nightingales used to sing in the spring. When were visitors in the house, there was a clatter ives in the kitchen and a smell of fried onions yard — and that was always a sure sign of a ful and savoury supper to follow.

d as soon as Dmitri Ionitch Startsev was ap- ed the district doctor, and took up his abode at zh, six miles from S——, he, too, was told that ultivated man it was essential for him to make cquaintance of the Turkins. In the winter he

delighted to see such an agreeable visitor. Come along; I will introduce you to my better half. I tell him, Verotchka," he went on, as he presented the doctor to his wife —" I tell him that he has no human right to sit at home in a hospital; he ought to devote his leisure to society. Oughtn't he, darling?"

" Sit here," said Vera Iosifovna, making her visitor sit down beside her. " You can dance attendance on me. My husband is jealous — he is an Othello; but we will try and behave so well that he will notice nothing."

" Ah, you spoilt chicken!" Ivan Petrovitch muttered tenderly, and he kissed her on the forehead. " You have come just in the nick of time," he said, addressing the doctor again. " My better half has written a ' hugeous ' novel, and she is going to read it aloud to-day."

" Petit Jean," said Vera Iosifovna to her husband, " dites que l'on nous donne du thé."

Startsev was introduced to Ekaterina Ivanovna, a girl of eighteen, very much like her mother, thin and pretty. Her expression was still childish and her figure was soft and slim; and her developed girlish bosom, healthy and beautiful, was suggestive of spring, real spring.

Then they drank tea with jam, honey, and sweetmeats, and with very nice cakes, which melted in the mouth. As the evening came on, other visitors gradually arrived, and Ivan Petrovitch fixed his laughing eyes on each of them and said:

" How do you do, if you please?"

n they all sat down in the drawing-room with serious faces, and Vera Iosifovna read her It began like this: "The frost was in- . . ." The windows were wide open; from tchen came the clatter of knives and the smell d onions. . . . It was comfortable in the soft rm-chair; the lights had such a friendly twinkle twilight of the drawing-room, and at the mo- on a summer evening when sounds of voices ughter floated in from the street and whiffs of rom the yard, it was difficult to grasp that the vas intense, and that the setting sun was light- th its chilly rays a solitary wayfarer on the plain. Vera Iosifovna read how a beautiful countess founded a school, a hospital, a , in her village, and fell in love with a wan-

"Do you publish your stories in magazines?" Startsev asked Vera Iosifovna.

"No," she answered. "I never publish. I write it and put it away in my cupboard. Why publish?" she explained. "We have enough to live on."

And for some reason every one sighed.

"And now, Kitten, you play something," Ivan Petrovitch said to his daughter.

The lid of the piano was raised and the music lying ready was opened. Ekaterina Ivanovna sat down and banged on the piano with both hands, and then banged again with all her might, and then again and again; her shoulders and bosom shook. She obstinately banged on the same notes, and it sounded as if she would not leave off until she had hammered the keys into the piano. The drawing-room was filled with the din; everything was resounding; the floor, the ceiling, the furniture. . . . Ekaterina Ivanovna was playing a difficult passage, interesting simply on account of its difficulty, long and monotonous, and Startsev, listening, pictured stones dropping down a steep hill and going on dropping, and he wished they would leave off dropping; and at the same time Ekaterina Ivanovna, rosy from the violent exercise, strong and vigorous, with a lock of hair falling over her forehead, attracted him very much. After the winter spent at Dyalizh among patients and peasants, to sit in a drawing-room, to watch this young, elegant, and, in all probability, pure creature, and to listen to these noisy, tedious

but still cultured sounds, was so pleasant, s novel. . . .

"Well, Kitten, you have played as never before, said Ivan Petrovitch, with tears in his eyes, whe his daughter had finished and stood up. "Di Denis; you won't write anything better."

All flocked round her, congratulated her, e pressed astonishment, declared that it was long sin they had heard such music, and she listened in silen with a faint smile, and her whole figure was e pressive of triumph.

"Splendid, superb!"

"Splendid," said Startsev, too, carried away l the general enthusiasm. "Where have you stu ied?" he asked Ekaterina Ivanovna. "At the Co servatoire?"

"No, I am only preparing for the Conservatoir and till now have been working with Madame Za lovsky."

"Have you finished at the high school here?"

"Oh, no," Vera Iosifovna answered for he "We have teachers for her at home; there mig be bad influences at the high school or a boardi school, you know. While a young girl is growi up, she ought to be under no influence but h mother's."

"All the same, I'm going to the Conservatoire said Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"No. Kitten loves her mamma. Kitten wo grieve papa and mamma."

"No, I'm going, I'm going," said Ekateri

Ivanovna, with playful caprice and stamping her foot.

And at supper it was Ivan Petrovitch who displayed his talents. Laughing only with his eyes, he told anecdotes, made epigrams, asked ridiculous riddles and answered them himself, talking the whole time in his extraordinary language, evolved in the course of prolonged practice in witticism and evidently now become a habit: "Badsome," "Hugeous," "Thank you most dumbly," and so on.

But that was not all. When the guests, replete and satisfied, trooped into the hall, looking for their coats and sticks, there bustled about them the footman Pavlusha, or, as he was called in the family, Pava — a lad of fourteen with shaven head and chubby cheeks.

"Come, Pava, perform!" Ivan Petrovitch said to him.

Pava struck an attitude, flung up his arm, and said in a tragic tone: "Unhappy woman, die!"

And every one roared with laughter.

"It's entertaining," thought Startsev, as he went out into the street.

He went to a restaurant and drank some beer, then set off to walk home to Dyalizh; he walked all the way singing:

"'Thy voice to me so languid and caressing. . . .'"

On going to bed, he felt not the slightest fatigue after the six miles' walk. On the contrary, he felt

II

Startsev kept meaning to go to the
ain, but there was a great deal of worl
spital, and he was unable to find free ti
s way more than a year passed in work
le. But one day a letter in a light blue
s brought him from the town. . . .

Vera Iosifovna had been suffering for so
)m migraine, but now since Kitten fright
ery day by saying that she was going awa
)nservatoire, the attacks began to be m
ent. All the doctors of the town had
e Turkins'; at last it was the district docto
:ra Iosifovna wrote him a touching letter
e begged him to come and relieve her s
artsev went, and after that he began to
ry often at the Turkins'. . . . He re
mething for Vera Iosifovna, and she wa
lling all her visitors that he was a wond
ceptional doctor. But it was not for th
:r migraine that he visited the Turkins' n
It was a holiday. Ekaterina Ivanovna
r long, wearisome exercises on the pian

hall to welcome a guest; Startsev took advantage of the momentary commotion, and whispered to Ekaterina Ivanovna in great agitation:

"For God's sake, I entreat you, don't torment me; let us go into the garden!"

She shrugged her shoulders, as though perplexed and not knowing what he wanted of her, but she got up and went.

"You play the piano for three or four hours," he said, following her; "then you sit with your mother, and there is no possibility of speaking to you. Give me a quarter of an hour at least, I beseech you."

Autumn was approaching, and it was quiet and melancholy in the old garden; the dark leaves lay thick in the walks. It was already beginning to get dark early.

"I haven't seen you for a whole week," Startsev went on, "and if you only knew what suffering it is! Let us sit down. Listen to me."

They had a favourite place in the garden; a seat under an old spreading maple. And now they sat down on this seat.

"What do you want?" said Ekaterina Ivanovna drily, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"I have not seen you for a whole week; I have not heard you for so long. I long passionately, I thirst for your voice. Speak."

She fascinated him by her freshness, the naïve expression of her eyes and cheeks. Even in the way her dress hung on her, he saw something extraordinarily charming, touching in its simplicity and

grace; and at the same time, in spite of this , she seemed to him intelligent and developed her years. He could talk with her about re, about art, about anything he liked; could in to her of life, of people, though it some- happened in the middle of serious conversa- e would laugh inappropriately or run away e house. Like almost all girls of her neigh- od, she had read a great deal (as a rule, read very little in S——, and at the lending they said if it were not for the girls and the Jews, they might as well shut up the library). fforded Startsev infinite delight; he used to eagerly every time what she had been read- last few days, and listened enthralled while d him.

hat have you been reading this week since

"Be in the cemetery," Startsev read, "at eleven o'clock to-night, near the tomb of Demetti."

"Well, that's not at all clever," he thought, coming to himself. "Why the cemetery? What for?"

It was clear: Kitten was playing a prank. Who would seriously dream of making an appointment at night in the cemetery far out of the town, when it might have been arranged in the street or in the town gardens? And was it in keeping with him — a district doctor, an intelligent, staid man — to be sighing, receiving notes, to hang about cemeteries, to do silly things that even schoolboys think ridiculous nowadays? What would this romance lead to? What would his colleagues say when they heard of it? Such were Startsev's reflections as he wandered round the tables at the club, and at half-past ten he suddenly set off for the cemetery.

By now he had his own pair of horses, and a coachman called Panteleimon, in a velvet waistcoat. The moon was shining. It was still warm, warm as it is in autumn. Dogs were howling in the suburb near the slaughter-house. Startsev left his horses in one of the side-streets at the end of the town, and walked on foot to the cemetery.

"We all have our oddities," he thought. "Kitten is odd, too; and — who knows? — perhaps she is not joking, perhaps she will come"; and he abandoned himself to this faint, vain hope, and it intoxicated him.

He walked for half a mile through the fields; the cemetery showed as a dark streak in the dis-

the black shadows of them and the popla
a long way round it was all white and bla
slumbering trees bowed their branches
white stones. It seemed as though it w
here than in the fields; the maple-leaves
sharply like paws on the yellow sand of
and on the stones, and the inscriptions on
could be clearly read. For the first mon
sev was struck now by what he saw for th
in his life, and what he would probably
again; a world not like anything else, a
which the moonlight was as soft and be
though slumbering here in its cradle, w
was no life, none whatever; but in every da
in every tomb, there was felt the presence
tery that promised a life peaceful, beautifi
The stones and faded flowers, together
autumn scent of the leaves, all told of fo
melancholy, and peace.

All was silence around; the stars loo
from the sky in the profound stillness,
sev's footsteps sounded loud and out of
only when the church clock began strikir

tranquillity, but stifled despair, the dumb dreariness of non-existence. . . .

Demetti's tomb was in the form of a shrine with an angel at the top. The Italian opera had once visited S—— and one of the singers had died; she had been buried here, and this monument put up to her. No one in the town remembered her, but the lamp at the entrance reflected the moonlight, and looked as though it were burning.

There was no one, and, indeed, who would come here at midnight? But Startsev waited, and as though the moonlight warmed his passion, he waited passionately, and, in imagination, pictured kisses and embraces. He sat near the monument for half an hour, then paced up and down the side avenues, with his hat in his hand, waiting and thinking of the many women and girls buried in these tombs who had been beautiful and fascinating, who had loved, at night burned with passion, yielding themselves to caresses. How wickedly Mother Nature jested at man's expense, after all! How humiliating it was to recognise it!

Startsev thought this, and at the same time he wanted to cry out that he wanted love, that he was eager for it at all costs. To his eyes they were not slabs of marble, but fair white bodies in the moonlight; he saw shapes hiding bashfully in the shadows of the trees, felt their warmth, and the languor was oppressive. . . .

And as though a curtain were lowered, the moon went behind a cloud, and suddenly all was darkness. Startsev could scarcely find the gate — by now it

s dark as it is on an autumn night. Then he
red about for an hour and a half, looking for
le-street in which he had left his horses.
am tired; I can scarcely stand on my legs,"
l to Panteleimon.
l settling himself with relief in his carriage,
ught: "Och! I ought not to get fat!"

III

following evening he went to the Turkins'
ke an offer. But it turned out to be an in-
ient moment, as Ekaterina Ivanovna was in
n room having her hair done by a hair-dresser.
as getting ready to go to a dance at the club.
had to sit a long time again in the dining-

in the afternoon, while you are a deacon's son, a district doctor. . . ."

"What of it?" he thought. "I don't care."

"Besides, if you marry her," the fragment went on, "then her relations will make you give up the district work and live in the town."

"After all," he thought, "if it must be the town, the town it must be. They will give a dowry; we can establish ourselves suitably."

At last Ekaterina Ivanovna came in, dressed for the ball, with a low neck, looking fresh and pretty; and Startsev admired her so much, and went into such ecstasies, that he could say nothing, but simply stared at her and laughed.

She began saying good-bye, and he — he had no reason for staying now — got up, saying that it was time for him to go home; his patients were waiting for him.

"Well, there's no help for that," said Ivan Petrovitch. "Go, and you might take Kitten to the club on the way."

It was spotting with rain; it was very dark, and they could only tell where the horses were by Panteleimon's husky cough. The hood of the carriage was put up.

"I stand upright; you lie down right; he lies all right," said Ivan Petrovitch as he put his daughter into the carriage.

They drove off.

"I was at the cemetery yesterday," Startsev began. "How ungenerous and merciless it was on your part! . . ."

ou went to the cemetery?"
es, I went there and waited almost till two
. I suffered . . ."
Vell, suffer, if you cannot understand a joke."
terina Ivanovna, pleased at having so cleverly
in a man who was in love with her, and at
the object of such intense love, burst out
ng and suddenly uttered a shriek of terror,
that very minute, the horses turned sharply
he gate of the club, and the carriage almost
over. Startsev put his arm round Ekaterina
na's waist; in her fright she nestled up to
nd he could not restrain himself, and passion-
kissed her on the lips and on the chin, and
l her more tightly.
hat's enough," she said drily.

attempt to put it into words. What is the use of preliminaries and introductions? What is the use of unnecessary fine words? My love is immeasurable. I beg, I beseech you," Startsev brought out at last, "be my wife!"

"Dmitri Ionitch," said Ekaterina Ivanovna, with a very grave face, after a moment's thought — "Dmitri Ionitch, I am very grateful to you for the honour. I respect you, but . . ." she got up and continued standing, "but, forgive me, I cannot be your wife. Let us talk seriously. Dmitri Ionitch, you know I love art beyond everything in life. I adore music; I love it frantically; I have dedicated my whole life to it. I want to be an artist; I want fame, success, freedom, and you want me to go on living in this town, to go on living this empty, useless life, which has become insufferable to me. To become a wife — oh, no, forgive me! One must strive towards a lofty, glorious goal, and married life would put me in bondage for ever. Dmitri Ionitch" (she faintly smiled as she pronounced his name; she thought of "Alexey Feofilaktitch") — "Dmitri Ionitch, you are a good, clever, honourable man; you are better than any one. . . ." Tears came into her eyes. "I feel for you with my whole heart, but . . . but you will understand. . . ."

And she turned away and went out of the drawing-room to prevent herself from crying.

Startsev's heart left off throbbing uneasily. Going out of the club into the street, he first of all tore off the stiff tie and drew a deep breath. He

tle ashamed and his vanity was wounded — not expected a refusal — and could not be- t all his dreams, his hopes and yearnings, him up to such a stupid end, just as in some y at an amateur performance, and he was r his feeling, for that love of his, so sorry felt as though he could have burst into sobs violently belaboured Panteleimon's broad h his umbrella.

hree days he could not get on with anything, d not eat nor sleep; but when the news him that Ekaterina Ivanovna had gone Moscow to enter the Conservatoire, he mer and lived as before.

wards, remembering sometimes how he had d about the cemetery or how he had driven the town to get a dress suit, he stretched

plained of his hard luck: he was sick of driving!

Startsev used to visit various households and met many people, but did not become intimate with any one. The inhabitants irritated him by their conversation, their views of life, and even their appearance. Experience taught him by degrees that while he played cards or lunched with one of these people, the man was a peaceable, friendly, and even intelligent human being; that as soon as one talked of anything not eatable, for instance, of politics or science, he would be completely at a loss, or would expound a philosophy so stupid and ill-natured that there was nothing else to do but wave one's hand in despair and go away. Even when Startsev tried to talk to liberal citizens, saying, for instance, that humanity, thank God, was progressing, and that one day it would be possible to dispense with passports and capital punishment, the liberal citizen would look at him askance and ask him mistrustfully: "Then any one could murder any one he chose in the open street?" And when, at tea or supper, Startsev observed in company that one should work, and that one ought not to live without working, every one took this as a reproach, and began to get angry and argue aggressively. With all that, the inhabitants did nothing, absolutely nothing, and took no interest in anything, and it was quite impossible to think of anything to say. And Startsev avoided conversation, and confined himself to eating and playing *vint*; and when there was a family festivity in some household and he was invited to a meal, then he sat and ate in silence, looking at his plate.

ıever nad been a Pole.

All such entertainments as theatres an
ıe declined, but he played *vint* every ev
hree hours with enjoyment. He had a
ersion to which he took imperceptibly,
ittle: in the evening he would take out of h
he notes he had gained by his practice,
imes there were stuffed in his pockets no
ow and green, and smelling of scent and vi
ncense and fish oil — up to the value o
oubles; and when they amounted to some
ıe took them to the Mutual Credit Ban
osited the money there to his account.

He was only twice at the Turkins' in t
f the four years after Ekaterina Ivan
one away, on each occasion at the invi
Vera Iosifovna, who was still undergoing
or migraine. Every summer Ekaterina
ame to stay with her parents, but he did
ee her; it somehow never happened.

But now four years had passed. One s
norning a letter was brought to the hospit
osifovna wrote to Dmitri Ionitch that she

Startsev considered, and in the evening he went to the Turkins'.

"How do you do, if you please?" Ivan Petrovitch met him, smiling with his eyes only. "Bongjour."

Vera Iosifovna, white-haired and looking much older, shook Startsev's hand, sighed affectedly, and said:

"You don't care to pay attentions to me, doctor. You never come and see us; I am too old for you. But now some one young has come; perhaps she will be more fortunate."

And Kitten? She had grown thinner, paler, had grown handsomer and more graceful; but now she was Ekaterina Ivanovna, not Kitten; she had lost the freshness and look of childish naïveté. And in her expression and manners there was something new — guilty and diffident, as though she did not feel herself at home here in the Turkins' house.

"How many summers, how many winters!" she said, giving Startsev her hand, and he could see that her heart was beating with excitement; and looking at him intently and curiously, she went on: "How much stouter you are! You look sunburnt and more manly, but on the whole you have changed very little."

Now, too, he thought her attractive, very attractive, but there was something lacking in her, or else something superfluous — he could not himself have said exactly what it was, but something prevented him from feeling as before. He did not like her pallor, her new expression, her faint smile, her voice,

... had troubled him
— and he felt awkward.

They had tea with cakes. Th
read aloud a novel; she read of
happen in real life, and Startsev
her handsome grey head, and v
finish.

"People are not stupid becaus
novels, but because they can't con
do," he thought.

"Not badsome," said Ivan Pet

Then Ekaterina Ivanovna playec
on the piano, and when she finish
fusely thanked and warmly praisec

"It's a good thing I did not mar
Startsev.

She looked at him, and evidently
ask her to go into the garden, b
silent.

"Let us have a talk," she said,
"How are you getting on? What
How are things? I have been thi
all these days," she went on nervou
to write to you, wanted to com-

ing forward to seeing you to-day with such emotion. For goodness' sake let us go into the garden."

They went into the garden and sat down on the seat under the old maple, just as they had done four years before. It was dark.

"How are you getting on?" asked Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"Oh, all right; I am jogging along," answered Startsev.

And he could think of nothing more. They were silent.

"I feel so excited!" said Ekaterina Ivanovna, and she hid her face in her hands. "But don't pay attention to it. I am so happy to be at home; I am so glad to see every one. I can't get used to it. So many memories! I thought we should talk without stopping till morning."

Now he saw her face near, her shining eyes, and in the darkness she looked younger than in the room, and even her old childish expression seemed to have come back to her. And indeed she was looking at him with naïve curiosity, as though she wanted to get a closer view and understanding of the man who had loved her so ardently, with such tenderness, and so unsuccessfully; her eyes thanked him for that love. And he remembered all that had been, every minute detail; how he had wandered about the cemetery, how he had returned home in the morning exhausted, and he suddenly felt sad and regretted the past. A warmth began glowing in his heart.

"Do you remember how I took you to the dance

club?" he asked. "It was dark and rainy . . ."

warmth was glowing now in his heart, and ged to talk, to rail at life. . . .

h!" he said with a sigh. "You ask how I ng. How do we live here? Why, not at Ve grow old, we grow stout, we grow slack. ter day passes; life slips by without colour, expressions, without thoughts. . . . In time working for gain, and in the evening b, the company of card-players, alcoholic, -voiced gentlemen whom I can't endure. s there nice in it?"

ell, you have work — a noble object in life. ed to be so fond of talking of your hospital. uch a queer girl then; I imagined myself such pianist. Nowadays all young ladies play

He got up to go into the house. She took his arm.

"You are the best man I've known in my life," she went on. "We will see each other and talk, won't we? Promise me. I am not a pianist; I am not in error about myself now, and I will not play before you or talk of music."

When they had gone into the house, and when Startsev saw in the lamplight her face, and her sad, grateful, searching eyes fixed upon him, he felt uneasy and thought again:

"It's a good thing I did not marry her then."

He began taking leave.

"You have no human right to go before supper," said Ivan Petrovitch as he saw him off. "It's extremely perpendicular on your part. Well, now, perform!" he added, addressing Pava in the hall.

Pava, no longer a boy, but a young man with moustaches, threw himself into an attitude, flung up his arm, and said in a tragic voice:

"Unhappy woman, die!"

All this irritated Startsev. Getting into his carriage, and looking at the dark house and garden which had once been so precious and so dear, he thought of everything at once — Vera Iosifovna's novels and Kitten's noisy playing, and Ivan Petrovitch's jokes and Pava's tragic posturing, and thought if the most talented people in the town were so futile, what must the town be?

Three days later Pava brought a letter from Ekaterina Ivanovna.

I must talk to you.— Your E. I

He read this letter, thought a m
to Pava:

"Tell them, my good fellow, th
to-day; I am very busy. Say I will
days or so."

But three days passed, a week pas
not go. Happening once to drive pa
house, he thought he must go in,
moment, but on second thoughts . .
in.

And he never went to the Turkins' :

V

Several more years have passed.
grown stouter still, has grown corpu
heavily, and already walks with his
back. When stout and red in the f
with his bells and his team of thre
Panteleimon, also stout and red in the
thick beefy neck, sits on the box, hol
stiffly out before him as though they

in his chariot. He has an immense practice in the town, no time to breathe, and already has an estate and two houses in the town, and he is looking out for a third more profitable; and when at the Mutual Credit Bank he is told of a house that is for sale, he goes to the house without ceremony, and, marching through all the rooms, regardless of half-dressed women and children who gaze at him in amazement and alarm, he prods at the doors with his stick, and says:

"Is that the study? Is that a bedroom? And what's here?"

And as he does so he breathes heavily and wipes the sweat from his brow.

He has a great deal to do, but still he does not give up his work as district doctor; he is greedy for gain, and he tries to be in all places at once. At Dyalizh and in the town he is called simply "Ionitch": "Where is Ionitch off to?" or "Should not we call in Ionitch to a consultation?"

Probably because his throat is covered with rolls of fat, his voice has changed; it has become thin and sharp. His temper has changed, too: he has grown ill-humoured and irritable. When he sees his patients he is usually out of temper; he impatiently taps the floor with his stick, and shouts in his disagreeable voice:

"Be so good as to confine yourself to answering my questions! Don't talk so much!"

He is solitary. He leads a dreary life; nothing interests him.

During all the years he had lived at Dyalizh his

at the club — the members of the
cook and waiters — know what he
he doesn't like and do their very u
him, or else he is sure to fly into a
on the floor with his stick.

As he eats his supper, he turns r
to time and puts in his spoke in
tion:

"What are you talking about?

And when at a neighbouring tal
of the Turkins, he asks:

"What Turkins are you speakin
mean the people whose daughter
piano?"

That is all that can be said abou

And the Turkins? Ivan Petrov
no older; he is not changed in the
makes jokes and tells anecdotes as
Iosifovna still reads her novels alou
with eagerness and touching simplici
plays the piano for four hours ever
grown visibly older, is constantly a
autumn goes to the Crimea with her

THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

IT is, as a rule, after losing heavily at cards or after a drinking-bout when an attack of dyspepsia is setting in that Stepan Stepanitch Zhilin wakes up in an exceptionally gloomy frame of mind. He looks sour, rumpled, and dishevelled; there is an expression of displeasure on his grey face, as though he were offended or disgusted by something. He dresses slowly, sips his Vichy water deliberately, and begins walking about the rooms.

"I should like to know what b-b-beast comes in here and does not shut the door!" he grumbles angrily, wrapping his dressing-gown about him and spitting loudly. "Take away that paper! Why is it lying about here? We keep twenty servants, and the place is more untidy than a pot-house. Who was that ringing? Who the devil is that?"

"That's Anfissa, the midwife who brought our Fedya into the world," answers his wife.

"Always hanging about . . . these cadging toadies!"

"There's no making you out, Stepan Stepanitch. You asked her yourself, and now you scold."

"I am not scolding; I am speaking. You might find something to do, my dear, instead of sitting with your hands in your lap trying to pick a quarrel. Upon my word, women are beyond my comprehen-

husband by way of diversion. It's tim
hese schoolgirlish ways, my dear. You
chool girl, not a young lady; you are a
nother! You turn away? Aha! It's
able to listen to the bitter truth!"

"It's strange that you only speak the b
when your liver is out of order."

"That's right; get up a scene."

"Have you been out late? Or playin

"What if I have? Is that anybody's
Am I obliged to give an account of my
any one? It's my own money I lose, I
What I spend as well as what is spent in
belongs to me — me. Do you hear?

And so on, all in the same style. But
time is Stepan Stepanitch so reasonable
stern or just as at dinner, when all his
are sitting about him. It usually begir
soup. After swallowing the first spoo
suddenly frowns and puts down his spo

"Damn it all!" he mutters; "I sh
dine at a restaurant, I suppose."

"What's wrong?" asks his wife

onions. . . . It's simply revolting, Anfissa Ivanovna," he says, addressing the midwife. "Every day I give no end of money for housekeeping. . . . I deny myself everything, and this is what they provide for my dinner! I suppose they want me to give up the office and go into the kitchen to do the cooking myself."

"The soup is very good to-day," the governess ventures timidly.

"Oh, you think so?" says Zhilin, looking at her angrily from under his eyelids. "Every one to his taste, of course. It must be confessed our tastes are very different, Varvara Vassilyevna. You, for instance, are satisfied with the behaviour of this boy" (Zhilin with a tragic gesture points to his son Fedya); "you are delighted with him, while I . . . I am disgusted. Yes!"

Fedya, a boy of seven with a pale, sickly face, leaves off eating and drops his eyes. His face grows paler still.

"Yes, you are delighted, and I am disgusted. Which of us is right, I cannot say, but I venture to think as his father, I know my own son better than you do. Look how he is sitting! Is that the way decently brought up children sit? Sit properly."

Fedya tilts his chin up, cranes his neck, and fancies that he is holding himself better. Tears come into his eyes.

"Eat your dinner! Hold your spoon properly! You wait. I'll show you, you horrid boy! Don't dare to whimper! Look straight at me!"

"But . . . let him have his dinner wife intervenes.

"No dinner for him! Such bla . . cals don't deserve dinner!"

Fedya, wincing and quivering all o down from his chair and goes into the

"You won't get off with that!" his sists. "If nobody else cares to look bringing up, so be it; I must begin. . let you be naughty and cry at dinne Idiot! You must do your duty! Do stand? Do your duty! Your father you must work, too! No one must e: of idleness! You must be a man! A

"For God's sake, leave off," says French. "Don't nag at us before least. . . . The old woman is all ear thanks to her, all the town will hear of

"I am not afraid of outsiders," an in Russian. "Anfissa Ivanovna sees speaking the truth. Why, do you th to be pleased with the boy? Do you he costs me? Do you know, you nas

Fedya wails aloud and begins to sob.

"This is insufferable," says his mother, getting up from the table and flinging down her dinner-napkin. "You never let us have dinner in peace! Your bread sticks in my throat."

And putting her handkerchief to her eyes, she walks out of the dining-room.

"Now she is offended," grumbles Zhilin, with a forced smile. "She's been spoilt. . . . That's how it is, Anfissa Ivanovna; no one likes to hear the truth nowadays. . . . It's all my fault, it seems."

Several minutes of silence follow. Zhilin looks round at the plates, and noticing that no one has yet touched their soup, heaves a deep sigh, and stares at the flushed and uneasy face of the governess.

"Why don't you eat, Varvara Vassilyevna?" he asks. "Offended, I suppose? I see. . . . You don't like to be told the truth. You must forgive me, it's my nature; I can't be a hypocrite. . . . I always blurt out the plain truth" (a sigh). "But I notice that my presence is unwelcome. No one can eat or talk while I am here. . . . Well, you should have told me, and I would have gone away. . . . I will go."

Zhilin gets up and walks with dignity to the door. As he passes the weeping Fedya he stops.

"After all that has passed here, you are free," he says to Fedya, throwing back his head with dignity. "I won't meddle in your bringing up again. I wash my hands of it! I humbly apologise that as a father, from a sincere desire for your welfare,

... with dignity to the door
to his bedroom.

When he wakes from his after-din
gins to feel the stings of conscience.
to face his wife, his son, Anfissa Ivanc
feels very wretched when he recalls
dinner, but his amour-propre is too r
he has not the manliness to be frank
on sulking and grumbling.

Waking up next morning, he feel
spirits, and whistles gaily as he washes
the dining-room to breakfast, he finds
who, at the sight of his father, gets up
him helplessly.

"Well, young man?" Zhilin gree
humouredly, sitting down to the ta
have you got to tell me, young man?
right? Well, come, chubby; give y
kiss."

With a pale, grave face Fedya go
father and touches his cheek with his q
then walks away and sits down in his
a word.

THE BLACK MONK

THE BLACK MONK

I

ANDREY VASSILITCH KOVRIN, who held a master's degree at the University, had exhausted himself, and had upset his nerves. He did not send for a doctor, but casually, over a bottle of wine, he spoke to a friend who was a doctor, and the latter advised him to spend the spring and summer in the country. Very opportunely a long letter came from Tanya Pesotsky, who asked him to come and stay with them at Borissovka. And he made up his mind that he really must go.

To begin with — that was in April — he went to his own home, Kovrinka, and there spent three weeks in solitude; then, as soon as the roads were in good condition, he set off, driving in a carriage, to visit Pesotsky, his former guardian, who had brought him up, and was a horticulturist well known all over Russia. The distance from Kovrinka to Borissovka was reckoned only a little over fifty miles. To drive along a soft road in May in a comfortable carriage with springs was a real pleasure.

Pesotsky had an immense house with columns and lions, off which the stucco was peeling, and with a footman in swallow-tails at the entrance. The old park, laid out in the English style, gloomy and severe,

d for almost three-quarters of a mile to the
nd there ended in a steep, precipitous clay
here pines grew with bare roots that looked
ggy paws; the water shone below with an
ily gleam, and the peewits flew up with a
e cry, and there one always felt that one must
n and write a ballad. But near the house
the courtyard and orchard, which together
e nurseries covered ninety acres, it was all
gaiety even in bad weather. Such marvel-
es, lilies, camellias; such tulips of all possible
from glistening white to sooty black — such
n of flowers, in fact, Kovrin had never seen
re as at Pesotsky's. It was only the begin-
spring, and the real glory of the flower-beds
l hidden away in the hot-houses. But even

took up horticulture. One came across, too, lovely, graceful trees with strong, straight stems like palms, and it was only by looking intently that one could recognise these trees as gooseberries or currants. But what made the garden most cheerful and gave it a lively air, was the continual coming and going in it, from early morning till evening; people with wheelbarrows, shovels, and watering-cans swarmed round the trees and bushes, in the avenues and the flower-beds, like ants. . . .

Kovrin arrived at Pesotsky's at ten o'clock in the evening. He found Tanya and her father, Yegor Semyonitch, in great anxiety. The clear starlight sky and the thermometer foretold a frost towards morning, and meanwhile Ivan Karlitch, the gardener, had gone to the town, and they had no one to rely upon. At supper they talked of nothing but the morning frost, and it was settled that Tanya should not go to bed, and between twelve and one should walk through the garden, and see that everything was done properly, and Yegor Semyonitch should get up at three o'clock or even earlier.

Kovrin sat with Tanya all the evening, and after midnight went out with her into the garden. It was cold. There was a strong smell of burning already in the garden. In the big orchard, which was called the commercial garden, and which brought Yegor Semyonitch several thousand clear profit, a thick, black, acrid smoke was creeping over the ground and, curling round the trees, was saving those thousands from the frost. Here the trees were arranged as on a chessboard, in straight and regular rows like

f soldiers, and this severe pedantic regularity,
fact that all the trees were of the same size,
d tops and trunks all exactly alike, made them
nonotonous and even dreary. Kovrin and
walked along the rows where fires of dung,
and all sorts of refuse were smouldering, and
me to time they were met by labourers who
ed in the smoke like shadows. The only
flower were the cherries, plums, and certain
f apples, but the whole garden was plunged
ke, and it was only near the nurseries that
could breathe freely.
en as a child I used to sneeze from the smoke
he said, shrugging his shoulders, " but to this
don't understand how smoke can keep off

oke takes the place of clouds when there are

shoulders; you used to wear short frocks, and I used to tease you, calling you a heron. . . . What time does!"

"Yes, five years!" sighed Tanya. "Much water has flowed since then. Tell me, Andryusha, honestly," she began eagerly, looking him in the face: "do you feel strange with us now? But why do I ask you? You are a man, you live your own interesting life, you are somebody. . . . To grow apart is so natural! But however that may be, Andryusha, I want you to think of us as your people. We have a right to that."

"I do, Tanya."

"On your word of honour?"

"Yes, on my word of honour."

"You were surprised this evening that we have so many of your photographs. You know my father adores you. Sometimes it seems to me that he loves you more than he does me. He is proud of you. You are a clever, extraordinary man, you have made a brilliant career for yourself, and he is persuaded that you have turned out like this because he brought you up. I don't try to prevent him from thinking so. Let him."

Dawn was already beginning, and that was especially perceptible from the distinctness with which the coils of smoke and the tops of the trees began to stand out in the air.

"It's time we were asleep, though," said Tanya, "and it's cold, too." She took his arm. "Thank you for coming, Andryusha. We have only uninteresting acquaintances, and not many of them. We

nly the garden, the garden, the garden, and
g else. Standards, half-standards," she
d. "Aports, Reinettes, Borovinkas, budded
grafted stocks. . . . All, all our life has
nto the garden. I never even dream of any-
ut apples and pears. Of course, it is very
d useful, but sometimes one longs for some-
lse for variety. I remember that when you
o come to us for the summer holidays, or
a visit, it always seemed to be fresher and
r in the house, as though the covers had been
off the lustres and the furniture. I was only
girl then, but yet I understood it."
talked a long while and with great feeling.
me reason the idea came into his head that
course of the summer he might grow fond
little, weak, talkative creature, might be car-

sion that suggested that if he were one minute late all would be ruined!

"Here is a business, brother . . ." he began, standing still to take breath. "On the surface of the ground, as you see, is frost; but if you raise the thermometer on a stick fourteen feet above the ground, there it is warm. . . . Why is that?"

"I really don't know," said Kovrin, and he laughed.

"H'm! . . . One can't know everything, of course. . . . However large the intellect may be, you can't find room for everything in it. I suppose you still go in chiefly for philosophy?"

"Yes, I lecture in psychology; I am working at philosophy in general."

"And it does not bore you?"

"On the contrary, it's all I live for."

"Well, God bless you! . . ." said Yegor Semyonitch, meditatively stroking his grey whiskers. "God bless you! . . . I am delighted about you . . . delighted, my boy. . . ."

But suddenly he listened, and, with a terrible face, ran off and quickly disappeared behind the trees in a cloud of smoke.

"Who tied this horse to an apple-tree?" Kovrin heard his despairing, heart-rending cry. "Who is the low scoundrel who has dared to tie this horse to an apple-tree? My God, my God! They have ruined everything; they have spoilt everything; they have done everything filthy, horrible, and abominable. The orchard's done for, the orchard's ruined. My God!"

hen he came back to Kovrin, his face looked
sted and mortified.
What is one to do with these accursed people?"
id in a tearful voice, flinging up his hands.
pka was carting dung at night, and tied the
to an apple-tree! He twisted the reins round
rascal, as tightly as he could, so that the bark
bed off in three places. What do you think
t! I spoke to him and he stands like a post
nly blinks his eyes. Hanging is too good for

owing calmer, he embraced Kovrin and kissed
n the cheek.
Well, God bless you! . . . God bless you!
he muttered. "I am very glad you have
Unutterably glad. . . . Thank you."

fashioned china cups, with cream and satisfying krendels made with milk and eggs; and these trifles reminded Kovrin again of his childhood and boyhood. The delightful present was blended with the impressions of the past that stirred within him; there was a tightness at his heart; yet he was happy.

He waited till Tanya was awake and had coffee with her, went for a walk, then went to his room and sat down to work. He read attentively, making notes, and from time to time raised his eyes to look out at the open windows or at the fresh, still dewy flowers in the vases on the table; and again he dropped his eyes to his book, and it seemed to him as though every vein in his body was quivering and fluttering with pleasure.

II

In the country he led just as nervous and restless a life as in town. He read and wrote a great deal, he studied Italian, and when he was out for a walk, thought with pleasure that he would soon sit down to work again. He slept so little that every one wondered at him; if he accidently dozed for half an hour in the daytime, he would lie awake all night, and, after a sleepless night, would feel cheerful and vigorous as though nothing had happened.

He talked a great deal, drank wine, and smoked expensive cigars. Very often, almost every day, young ladies of neighbouring families would come to the Pesotskys', and would sing and play the piano with Tanya; sometimes a young neighbour who was

d violinist would come, too. Kovrin listened agerness to the music and singing, and was ted by it, and this showed itself by his eyes and his head falling to one side.

day he was sitting on the balcony after g tea, reading. At the same time, in the g-room, Tanya taking soprano, one of the ladies a contralto, and the young man with olin, were practising a well-known serenade aga's. Kovrin listened to the words — they Russian — and could not understand their g. At last, leaving his book and listening vely, he understood: a maiden, full of sick , heard one night in her garden mysterious , so strange and lovely that she was obliged ognise them as a holy harmony which is un-

laws of optics, which the legend does not recognise, and listen to the rest. From that mirage there was cast another mirage, then from that other a third, so that the image of the black monk began to be repeated endlessly from one layer of the atmosphere to another. So that he was seen at one time in Africa, at another in Spain, then in Italy, then in the Far North. . . . Then he passed out of the atmosphere of the earth, and now he is wandering all over the universe, still never coming into conditions in which he might disappear. Possibly he may be seen now in Mars or in some star of the Southern Cross. But, my dear, the real point on which the whole legend hangs lies in the fact that, exactly a thousand years from the day when the monk walked in the desert, the mirage will return to the atmosphere of the earth again and will appear to men. And it seems that the thousand years is almost up. . . . According to the legend, we may look out for the black monk to-day or to-morrow."

"A queer mirage," said Tanya, who did not like the legend.

"But the most wonderful part of it all," laughed Kovrin, "is that I simply cannot recall where I got this legend from. Have I read it somewhere? Have I heard it? Or perhaps I dreamed of the black monk. I swear I don't remember. But the legend interests me. I have been thinking about it all day."

Letting Tanya go back to her visitors, he went out of the house, and, lost in meditation, walked by the flower-beds. The sun was already setting.

lowers, having just been watered, gave forth
ıp, irritating fragrance. Indoors they began
g again, and in the distance the violin had
fect of a human voice. Kovrin, racking his
to remember where he had read or heard
gend, turned slowly towards the park, and un-
ously went as far as the river. By a little
hat ran along the steep bank, between the bare
he went down to the water, disturbed the
s there and frightened two ducks. The last
of the setting sun still threw light here and
on the gloomy pines, but it was quite dark on
rface of the river. Kovrin crossed to the
side by the narrow bridge. Before him lay
field covered with young rye not yet in blos-
There was no living habitation, no living soul
distance, and it seemed as though the little

spout, a tall black column. Its outline was indistinct, but from the first instant it could be seen that it was not standing still, but moving with fearful rapidity, moving straight towards Kovrin, and the nearer it came the smaller and the more distinct it was. Kovrin moved aside into the rye to make way for it, and only just had time to do so.

A monk, dressed in black, with a grey head and black eyebrows, his arms crossed over his breast, floated by him. . . . His bare feet did not touch the earth. After he had floated twenty feet beyond him, he looked round at Kovrin, and nodded to him with a friendly but sly smile. But what a pale, fearfully pale, thin face! Beginning to grow larger again, he flew across the river, collided noiselessly with the clay bank and pines, and passing through them, vanished like smoke.

"Why, you see," muttered Kovrin, "there must be truth in the legend."

Without trying to explain to himself the strange apparition, glad that he had succeeded in seeing so near and so distinctly, not only the monk's black garments, but even his face and eyes, agreeably excited, he went back to the house.

In the park and in the garden people were moving about quietly, in the house they were playing — so he alone had seen the monk. He had an intense desire to tell Tanya and Yegor Semyonitch, but he reflected that they would certainly think his words the ravings of delirium, and that would frighten them; he had better say nothing.

He laughed aloud, sang, and danced the mazurka;

in high spirits, and all of them, the visitors
nya, thought he had a peculiar look, radiant
pired, and that he was very interesting.

III

r supper, when the visitors had gone, he went
room and lay down on the sofa: he wanted
k about the monk. But a minute later Tanya
n.

ere, Andryusha; read father's articles," she
iving him a bundle of pamphlets and proofs.
are splendid articles. He writes capitally."
pitally, indeed!" said Yegor Semyonitch,
ng her and smiling constrainedly; he was
d. "Don't listen to her, please; don't read

all nonsense . . . tiresome stuff. Besides, I believe it's bedtime."

Tanya went away. Yegor Semyonitch sat down on the sofa by Kovrin and heaved a deep sigh.

"Yes, my boy . . ." he began after a pause. "That's how it is, my dear lecturer. Here I write articles, and take part in exhibitions, and receive medals. . . . Pesotsky, they say, has apples the size of a head, and Pesotsky, they say, has made his fortune with his garden. In short, 'Kotcheby is rich and glorious.' But one asks oneself: what is it all for? The garden is certainly fine, a model. It's not really a garden, but a regular institution, which is of the greatest public importance because it marks, so to say, a new era in Russian agriculture and Russian industry. But, what's it for? What's the object of it?"

"The fact speaks for itself."

"I do not mean in that sense. I meant to ask: what will happen to the garden when I die? In the condition in which you see it now, it would not be maintained for one month without me. The whole secret of success lies not in its being a big garden or a great number of labourers being employed in it, but in the fact that I love the work. Do you understand? I love it perhaps more than myself. Look at me; I do everything myself. I work from morning to night: I do all the grafting myself, the pruning myself, the planting myself. I do it all myself: when any one helps me I am jealous and irritable till I am rude. The whole secret lies

ing it — that is, in the sharp eye of the master; nd in the master's hands, and in the feeling makes one, when one goes anywhere for an s visit, sit, ill at ease, with one's heart far away, l that something may have happened in the n. But when I die, who will look after it? will work? The gardener? The labourers? But I tell you, my dear fellow, the worst in the garden is not a hare, not a cockchafer, ot the frost, but any outside person."

nd Tanya?" asked Kovrin, laughing. "She be more harmful than a hare? She loves the and understands it."

es, she loves it and understands it. If after eath the garden goes to her and she is the ss, of course nothing better could be wished.

will not marry him, I know it quite well; but I can't bear to see him! Altogether, my boy, I am very queer. I know that."

Yegor Semyonitch got up and walked about the room in excitement, and it was evident that he wanted to say something very important, but could not bring himself to it.

"I am very fond of you, and so I am going to speak to you openly," he decided at last, thrusting his hands into his pockets. "I deal plainly with certain delicate questions, and say exactly what I think, and I cannot endure so-called hidden thoughts. I will speak plainly: you are the only man to whom I should not be afraid to marry my daughter. You are a clever man with a good heart, and would not let my beloved work go to ruin; and the chief reason is that I love you as a son, and I am proud of you. If Tanya and you could get up a romance somehow, then — well! I should be very glad and even happy. I tell you this plainly, without mincing matters, like an honest man."

Kovrin laughed. Yegor Semyonitch opened the door to go out, and stood in the doorway.

"If Tanya and you had a son, I would make a horticulturist of him," he said, after a moment's thought. "However, this is idle dreaming. Good-night."

Left alone, Kovrin settled himself more comfortably on the sofa and took up the articles. The title of one was "On Intercropping"; of another, "A Few Words on the Remarks of Monsieur Z. concerning the Trenching of the Soil for a New

peaceable and impersonal contents:
it was the Russian Antonovsky Appl
Semyonitch began it with "Audiatu
and finished it with "Sapienti sat"
these two quotations a perfect torren
phrases directed "at the learned igr
recognised horticultural authorities,
Nature from the height of their uni
or at Monsieur Gaucher, "whose su
the work of the vulgar and the dilet
then followed an inappropriate, aff
sincere regret that peasants who s
broke the branches could not nowad

"It is beautiful, charming, healthy
in this there is strife and passion," th
"I suppose that everywhere and in a
of ideas are nervous, and marked b
sensitiveness. Most likely it must be

He thought of Tanya, who was s
Yegor Semyonitch's articles. Small,
thin that her shoulder-blades stuck
wide and open, dark and intelligent,
gaze, as though looking for something
like her father with a little hurried ste

mimicry and gesticulation. No doubt she was nervous in the extreme.

Kovrin went on reading the articles, but he understood nothing of them, and flung them aside. The same pleasant excitement with which he had earlier in the evening danced the mazurka and listened to the music was now mastering him again and rousing a multitude of thoughts. He got up and began walking about the room, thinking about the black monk. It occurred to him that if this strange, supernatural monk had appeared to him only, that meant that he was ill and had reached the point of having hallucinations. This reflection frightened him, but not for long.

"But I am all right, and I am doing no harm to any one; so there is no harm in my hallucinations," he thought; and he felt happy again.

He sat down on the sofa and clasped his hands round his head. Restraining the unaccountable joy which filled his whole being, he then paced up and down again, and sat down to his work. But the thought that he read in the book did not satisfy him. He wanted something gigantic, unfathomable, stupendous. Towards morning he undressed and reluctantly went to bed: he ought to sleep.

When he heard the footsteps of Yegor Semyonitch going out into the garden, Kovrin rang the bell and asked the footman to bring him some wine. He drank several glasses of Lafitte, then wrapped himself up, head and all; his consciousness grew clouded and he fell asleep.

Tanya burst out crying and went to
would not come down to dinner nor
Yegor Semyonitch went about loo
dignified, as though to give every or
that for him the claims of justice
were more important than anything e
but he could not keep it up for long
into depression. He walked abou
jectedly, continually sighing: "Oh
God!" and at dinner did not eat a n
guilty and conscience-stricken, he
locked door and called timidly:

"Tanya! Tanya!"

And from behind the door cam
weak with crying but still determine

"Leave me alone, if you please."

The depression of the master a
reflected in the whole household, ev
ers working in the garden. Kovrin
his interesting work, but at last he,
and uncomfortable. To dissipate
humour in some way, he made up h
vene, and towards evening he kno
door. He was admitted

face, flushed in patches with crying. "Is it really so serious? Fie, fie!"

"But if you knew how he tortures me!" she said, and floods of scalding tears streamed from her big eyes. "He torments me to death," she went on, wringing her hands. "I said nothing to him . . . nothing . . . I only said that there was no need to keep . . . too many labourers . . . if we could hire them by the day when we wanted them. You know . . . you know the labourers have been doing nothing for a whole week. . . . I . . . I . . . only said that, and he shouted and . . . said . . . a lot of horrible insulting things to me. What for?"

"There, there," said Kovrin, smoothing her hair. "You've quarrelled with each other, you've cried, and that's enough. You must not be angry for long — that's wrong . . . all the more as he loves you beyond everything."

"He has . . . has spoiled my whole life," Tanya went on, sobbing. "I hear nothing but abuse and . . . insults. He thinks I am of no use in the house. Well! He is right. I shall go away to-morrow; I shall become a telegraph clerk. . . . I don't care. . . ."

"Come, come, come. . . . You mustn't cry, Tanya. You mustn't, dear. . . . You are both hot-tempered and irritable, and you are both to blame. Come along; I will reconcile you."

Kovrin talked affectionately and persuasively, while she went on crying, twitching her shoulders

were enough to make this litt
for a whole day, perhaps for h
forting Tanya, Kovrin thought
girl and her father, he might
and would not find people wh
one of themselves, as one of
had not been for those two l
having lost his father and moth
never to the day of his death h
meant by genuine affection and
love which is only lavished on
lations; and he felt that the ne
shaking girl responded to his h
nerves like iron to a magnet. I
loved a healthy, strong, rosy-c
pale, weak, unhappy Tanya attr

And he liked stroking her hai
pressing her hand and wiping a
At last she left off crying. She
time complaining of her fathe
sufferable life in that house, e
put himself in her place; then
little, smiling, and sighing that
such a bad temper. At last

pened, and both were eating rye bread with salt on it, as both were hungry.

V

Glad that he had been so successful in the part of peacemaker, Kovrin went into the park. Sitting on a garden seat, thinking, he heard the rattle of a carriage and a feminine laugh — visitors were arriving. When the shades of evening began falling on the garden, the sounds of the violin and singing voices reached him indistinctly, and that reminded him of the black monk. Where, in what land or in what planet, was that optical absurdity moving now?

Hardly had he recalled the legend and pictured in his imagination the dark apparition he had seen in the rye-field, when, from behind a pine-tree exactly opposite, there came out noiselessly, without the slightest rustle, a man of medium height with uncovered grey head, all in black, and barefooted like a beggar, and his black eyebrows stood out conspicuously on his pale, death-like face. Nodding his head graciously, this beggar or pilgrim came noiselessly to the seat and sat down, and Kovrin recognised him as the black monk.

For a minute they looked at one another, Kovrin with amazement, and the monk with friendliness, and, just as before, a little slyness, as though he were thinking something to himself.

"But you are a mirage," said Kovrin. "Why are you here and sitting still? That does not fit in with the legend."

"Then you don't exist?" said Kov

"You can think as you like," said t
a faint smile. "I exist in your im
your imagination is part of nature,
nature."

"You have a very old, wise, and
pressive face, as though you really h
than a thousand years," said Kovrin
know that my imagination was capa
such phenomena. But why do you lo
such enthusiasm? Do you like me?'

"Yes, you are one of those few
called the chosen of God. You do
eternal truth. Your thoughts, you
marvellous studies you are engaged i
life, bear the Divine, the heavenly sta
they are consecrated to the rational ar
— that is, to what is eternal."

"You said 'eternal truth.' . . .
truth of use to man and within his re
no eternal life?"

"There is eternal life," said the n

"Do you believe in the immorta

"Yes, of course. A grand brilli

in full understanding and freedom, mankind would be of little account; developing in a natural way, it would have to wait a long time for the end of its earthly history. You will lead it some thousands of years earlier into the kingdom of eternal truth — and therein lies your supreme service. You are the incarnation of the blessing of God, which rests upon men."

"And what is the object of eternal life?" asked Kovrin.

"As of all life — enjoyment. True enjoyment lies in knowledge, and eternal life provides innumerable and inexhaustible sources of knowledge, and in that sense it has been said: 'In My Father's house there are many mansions.'"

"If only you knew how pleasant it is to hear you!" said Kovrin, rubbing his hands with satisfaction.

"I am very glad."

"But I know that when you go away I shall be worried by the question of your reality. You are a phantom, an hallucination. So I am mentally deranged, not normal?"

"What if you are? Why trouble yourself? You are ill because you have overworked and exhausted yourself, and that means that you have sacrificed your health to the idea, and the time is near at hand when you will give up life itself to it. What could be better? That is the goal towards which all divinely endowed, noble natures strive."

"If I know I am mentally affected, can I trust myself?"

of the age, nervous exhaustion and
et cetera, can only seriously agitate tho
the object of life in the present — that
mon herd."

"The Romans used to say: *Mens
pore sano.*"

"Not everything the Greeks and the
is true. Exaltation, enthusiasm, ecsta
distinguishes prophets, poets, martyrs
from the common folk — is repellent t
side of man — that is, his physical healt
if you want to be healthy and normal, g
mon herd."

"Strange that you repeat what ofte
my mind," said Kovrin. "It is as tho
seen and overheard my secret thoughts
let us talk about me. What do you m
nal truth'?"

The monk did not answer. Kovri
him and could not distinguish his fac
tures grew blurred and misty. Then
head and arms disappeared; his body se
into the seat and the evening twilight,

happy. The little the monk had said to him had flattered, not his vanity, but his whole soul, his whole being. To be one of the chosen, to serve eternal truth, to stand in the ranks of those who could make mankind worthy of the kingdom of God some thousands of years sooner — that is, to free men from some thousands of years of unnecessary struggle, sin, and suffering; to sacrifice to the idea everything — youth, strength, health; to be ready to die for the common weal — what an exalted, what a happy lot! He recalled his past — pure, chaste, laborious; he remembered what he had learned himself and what he had taught to others, and decided that there was no exaggeration in the monk's words.

Tanya came to meet him in the park: she was by now wearing a different dress.

"Are you here?" she said. "And we have been looking and looking for you. . . . But what is the matter with you?" she asked in wonder, glancing at his radiant, ecstatic face and eyes full of tears. "How strange you are, Andryusha!"

"I am pleased, Tanya," said Kovrin, laying his hand on her shoulders. "I am more than pleased: I am happy. Tanya, darling Tanya, you are an extraordinary, nice creature. Dear Tanya, I am so glad, I am so glad!"

He kissed both her hands ardently, and went on:

"I have just passed through an exalted, wonderful, unearthly moment. But I can't tell you all about it or you would call me mad and not believe me. Let us talk of you. Dear, delightful Tanya! I love you, and am used to loving you. To have

...," laughed Tanya, "yo
in two days. We are humble
great man."

"No; let us talk in earnest!
take you with me, Tanya. Y
with me? Will you be mine?'

"Come," said Tanya, and t
but the laugh would not come, a
came into her face.

She began breathing quickl
quickly, but not to the house,
park.

"I was not thinking of it .
ing of it," she said, wringing h

And Kovrin followed her ar
with the same radiant, enthusia

"I want a love that will domi
and that love only you, Tanya,
happy! I am happy!"

She was overwhelmed, and h
ing together, seemed ten years
while he thought her beautiful
rapture aloud:

"How lovely she is!"

wedding, Yegor Semyonitch spent a long time in pacing from one corner of the room to the other, trying to conceal his agitation. His hands began trembling, his neck swelled and turned purple, he ordered his racing droshky and drove off somewhere. Tanya, seeing how he lashed the horse, and seeing how he pulled his cap over his ears, understood what he was feeling, shut herself up in her room, and cried the whole day.

In the hot-houses the peaches and plums were already ripe; the packing and sending off of these tender and fragile goods to Moscow took a great deal of care, work, and trouble. Owing to the fact that the summer was very hot and dry, it was necessary to water every tree, and a great deal of time and labour was spent on doing it. Numbers of caterpillars made their appearance, which, to Kovrin's disgust, the labourers and even Yegor Semyonitch and Tanya squashed with their fingers. In spite of all that, they had already to book autumn orders for fruit and trees, and to carry on a great deal of correspondence. And at the very busiest time, when no one seemed to have a free moment, the work of the fields carried off more than half their labourers from the garden. Yegor Semyonitch, sunburnt, exhausted, ill-humoured, galloped from the fields to the garden and back again; cried that he was being torn to pieces, and that he should put a bullet through his brains.

Then came the fuss and worry of the trousseau, to which the Pesotskys attached a good deal of importance. Every one's head was in a whirl from the

night. But all this hard labour pa
as though in a fog. Tanya felt that
piness had taken her unawares, though
she was fourteen, for some reason h
that Kovrin would marry her and no
was bewildered, could not grasp it, co
herself. . . . At one minute such joy
down upon her that she longed to fl
clouds and there pray to God, at ar
she would remember that in August s
to part from her home and leave h
goodness knows why, the idea woul
that she was worthless — insignifican
of a great man like Kovrin — and sh
her room, lock herself in, and cry b
eral hours. When there were visit
suddenly fancy that Kovrin looked
handsome, and that all the women w
him and envying her, and her soul
pride and rapture, as though she h
the whole world; but he had only t
at any young lady for her to be
jealousy, to retreat to her room — a

It was almost the same with Yegor Semyonitch. He worked from morning till night, was always in a hurry, was irritable, and flew into rages, but all of this was in a sort of spellbound dream. It seemed as though there were two men in him: one was the real Yegor Semyonitch, who was moved to indignation, and clutched his head in despair when he heard of some irregularity from Ivan Karlovitch the gardener; and another — not the real one — who seemed as though he were half drunk, would interrupt a business conversation at half a word, touch the gardener on the shoulder, and begin muttering:

"Say what you like, there is a great deal in blood. His mother was a wonderful woman, most high-minded and intelligent. It was a pleasure to look at her good, candid, pure face; it was like the face of an angel. She drew splendidly, wrote verses, spoke five foreign languages, sang. . . . Poor thing! she died of consumption. The Kingdom of Heaven be hers."

The unreal Yegor Semyonitch sighed, and after a pause went on:

"When he was a boy and growing up in my house, he had the same angelic face, good and candid. The way he looks and talks and moves is as soft and elegant as his mother's. And his intellect! We were always struck with his intelligence. To be sure, it's not for nothing he's a Master of Arts! It's not for nothing! And wait a bit, Ivan Karlovitch, what will he be in ten years' time? He will be far above us!"

But at this point the real Yegor Semyonitch, sud-

ruined i

Kovrin, meanwhile, worked with the as before, and did not notice the ge tion. Love only added fuel to the fl every talk with Tanya he went to his and triumphant, took up his book or l with the same passion with which he h Tanya and told her of his love. W monk had told him of the chosen of G truth, of the brilliant future of manki gave peculiar and extraordinary signi work, and filled his soul with pride and ness of his own exalted consequence. a week, in the park or in the house, he monk and had long conversations with did not alarm him, but, on the contr him, as he was now firmly persuaded tl ritions only visited the elect few who their fellows and devote themselves to the idea.

One day the monk appeared at di sat in the dining-room window. Kc lighted, and very adroitly began a con Yegor Semyonitch and Tanya of wha

out suspecting that Kovrin was not talking to them but to his hallucination.

Imperceptibly the fast of the Assumption was approaching, and soon after came the wedding, which, at Yegor Semyonitch's urgent desire, was celebrated with "a flourish"— that is, with senseless festivities that lasted for two whole days and nights. Three thousand roubles' worth of food and drink was consumed, but the music of the wretched hired band, the noisy toasts, the scurrying to and fro of the footmen, the uproar and crowding, prevented them from appreciating the taste of the expensive wines and wonderful delicacies ordered from Moscow.

VII

One long winter night Kovrin was lying in bed, reading a French novel. Poor Tanya, who had headaches in the evenings from living in town, to which she was not accustomed, had been asleep a long while, and, from time to time, articulated some incoherent phrase in her restless dreams.

It struck three o'clock. Kovrin put out the light and lay down to sleep, lay for a long time with his eyes closed, but could not get to sleep because, as he fancied, the room was very hot and Tanya talked in her sleep. At half-past four he lighted the candle again, and this time he saw the black monk sitting in an arm-chair near the bed.

"Good-morning," said the monk, and after a brief pause he asked: "What are you thinking of now?"

"Because you are wise. Your atti
fame is one of indifference, as towards
no longer interests you."

"Yes, that is true."

"Renown does not allure you no
there flattering, amusing, or edifying in
your name on a tombstone, then tim
the inscription together with the gild
over, happily there are too many of
weak memory of mankind to be able t
names."

"Of course," assented Kovrin. "
should they be remembered? But l
something else. Of happiness, for inst
is happiness?"

When the clock struck five, he was
bed, dangling his feet to the carpet, t
monk:

"In ancient times a happy man
frightened of his happiness — it was
and to propitiate the gods he brought
his favourite ring. Do you know,
Polykrates, begin to be uneasy of my l
seems strange to me that from morni

I suffer from sleeplessness, but I am not dull. I say it in earnest; I begin to feel perplexed."

"But why?" the monk asked in wonder. "Is joy a supernatural feeling? Ought it not to be the normal state of man? The more highly a man is developed on the intellectual and moral side, the more independent he is, the more pleasure life gives him. Socrates, Diogenes, and Marcus Aurelius, were joyful, not sorrowful. And the Apostle tells us: 'Rejoice continually'; 'Rejoice and be glad.'"

"But will the gods be suddenly wrathful?" Kovrin jested; and he laughed. "If they take from me comfort and make me go cold and hungry, it won't be very much to my taste."

Meanwhile Tanya woke up, and looked with amazement and horror at her husband. He was talking, addressing the arm-chair, laughing and gesticulating; his eyes were gleaming, and there was something strange in his laugh.

"Andryusha, whom are you talking to?" she asked, clutching the hand he stretched out to the monk. "Andryusha! Whom?"

"Oh! Whom?" said Kovrin in confusion. "Why, to him. . . . He is sitting here," he said, pointing to the black monk.

"There is no one here . . . no one! Andryusha, you are ill!"

Tanya put her arm round her husband and held him tight, as though protecting him from the apparition, and put her hand over his eyes.

"You are ill!" she sobbed, trembling all over. "Forgive me, my precious, my dear one, but I have

frightened, and began dressing.

"It's nothing, Tanya; it's nothi
shivering. "I really am not qu
time to admit that."

"I have noticed it for a lon
father has noticed it," she said, t
her sobs. "You talk to yoursel
strangely . . . and can't sleep.
God, save us!" she said in terro
frightened, Andryusha; for God
frightened. . . ."

She began dressing, too. Only
her, Kovrin realised the danger
realised the meaning of the black
versations with him. It was clear
he was mad.

Neither of them knew why they
into the dining-room: she in front
her. There they found Yegor S
ing in his dressing-gown and wit
hand. He was staying with the
awakened by Tanya's sobs.

"Don't be frightened, Andryu

Kovrin was too much agitated to speak. He wanted to say to his father-in-law in a playful tone: "Congratulate me; it appears I have gone out of my mind"; but he could only move his lips and smile bitterly.

At nine o'clock in the morning they put on his jacket and fur coat, wrapped him up in a shawl, and took him in a carriage to a doctor.

VIII

Summer had come again, and the doctor advised their going into the country. Kovrin had recovered; he had left off seeing the black monk, and he had only to get up his strength. Staying at his father-in-law's, he drank a great deal of milk, worked for only two hours out of the twenty-four, and neither smoked nor drank wine.

On the evening before Elijah's Day they had an evening service in the house. When the deacon was handing the priest the censer the immense old room smelt like a graveyard, and Kovrin felt bored. He went out into the garden. Without noticing the gorgeous flowers, he walked about the garden, sat down on a seat, then strolled about the park; reaching the river, he went down and then stood lost in thought, looking at the water. The sullen pines with their shaggy roots, which had seen him a year before so young, so joyful and confident, were not whispering now, but standing mute and motionless, as though they did not recognise him. And, indeed, his head was closely cropped, his beautiful long hair

horizon, a sign of windy weath
still. Looking in the direction
before the black monk had fir
stood for twenty minutes, till t
begun to fade. . . .

When, listless and dissatisfie
the service was over. Yegor Se
were sitting on the steps of the
tea. They were talking of so
Kovrin, ceased at once, and he
faces that their talk had been a

"I believe it is time for you
Tanya said to her husband.

"No, it is not time yet . .
down on the bottom step. "I
don't want it."

Tanya exchanged a trouble
father, and said in a guilty voice

"You notice yourself that m

"Yes, a great deal of good
"I congratulate you: I have
weight since Friday." He pres
in his hands and said miserably:

me at last to idiocy. I went out of my mind, I had megalomania; but then I was cheerful, confident, and even happy; I was interesting and original. Now I have become more sensible and stolid, but I am just like every one else: I am — mediocrity; I am weary of life. . . . Oh, how cruelly you have treated me! . . . I saw hallucinations, but what harm did that do to any one? I ask, what harm did that do any one?"

"Goodness knows what you are saying!" sighed Yegor Semyonitch. "It's positively wearisome to listen to it."

"Then don't listen."

The presence of other people, especially Yegor Semyonitch, irritated Kovrin now; he answered him drily, coldly, and even rudely, never looked at him but with irony and hatred, while Yegor Semyonitch was overcome with confusion and cleared his throat guiltily, though he was not conscious of any fault in himself. At a loss to understand why their charming and affectionate relations had changed so abruptly, Tanya huddled up to her father and looked anxiously in his face; she wanted to understand and could not understand, and all that was clear to her was that their relations were growing worse and worse every day, that of late her father had begun to look much older, and her husband had grown irritable, capricious, quarrelsome and uninteresting. She could not laugh or sing; at dinner she ate nothing; did not sleep for nights together, expecting something awful, and was so worn out that on one occasion she lay in a dead faint from dinner-time

speare were that their kin
did not cure them of their
tion," said Kovrin. "If M
mide for his nerves, had wo
of the twenty-four, and had
able man would have left n
than his dog. Doctors and
ceed in stupefying mankind,
pass for genius and in bring
If only you knew," Kovrin
"how grateful I am to you.'

He felt intense irritation, a
much, he got up quickly and
It was still, and the fragranc
and the marvel of Peru float
dow. The moonlight lay in
floor and on the piano in the
Kovrin remembered the rap
summer when there had been
marvel of Peru and the moo
window. To bring back the
went quickly to his study, light
told the footman to bring him

him giddy, and brought on palpitations of the heart, so that he was obliged to take bromide.

Before going to bed, Tanya said to him:

"Father adores you. You are cross with him about something, and it is killing him. Look at him; he is ageing, not from day to day, but from hour to hour. I entreat you, Andryusha, for God's sake, for the sake of your dead father, for the sake of my peace of mind, be affectionate to him."

"I can't, I don't want to."

"But why?" asked Tanya, beginning to tremble all over. "Explain why."

"Because he is antipathetic to me, that's all," said Kovrin carelessly; and he shrugged his shoulders. "But we won't talk about him: he is your father."

"I can't understand, I can't," said Tanya, pressing her hands to her temples and staring at a fixed point. "Something incomprehensible, awful, is going on in the house. You have changed, grown unlike yourself. . . . You, clever, extraordinary man as you are, are irritated over trifles, meddle in paltry nonsense. . . . Such trivial things excite you, that sometimes one is simply amazed and can't believe that it is you. Come, come, don't be angry, don't be angry," she went on, kissing his hands, frightened of her own words. "You are clever, kind, noble. You will be just to father. He is so good."

"He is not good; he is just good-natured. Burlesque old uncles like your father, with well-fed, good-natured faces, extraordinarily hospitable and queer, at one time used to touch me and amuse me

Tanya sat down on the b
the pillow.

"This is torture," she sai
was evident that she was utt
it was hard for her to spea
of peace since the winter.
My God! I am wretched."

"Oh, of course, I am H
father are the innocents. O

His face seemed to Tany
Hatred and an ironical expr
And, indeed, she had notice
something lacking in his fac
his hair had been cut his face
wanted to say something w
mediately she caught herself
ing, she was frightened and w

IX

Kovrin received a professo
The inaugural address was
December, and a notice to t
in the corridor at the Univ

He had hæmorrhage from the throat. He was often spitting blood, but it happened two or three times a month that there was a considerable loss of blood, and then he grew extremely weak and sank into a drowsy condition. This illness did not particularly frighten him, as he knew that his mother had lived for ten years or longer suffering from the same disease, and the doctors assured him that there was no danger, and had only advised him to avoid excitement, to lead a regular life, and to speak as little as possible.

In January again his lecture did not take place owing to the same reason, and in February it was too late to begin the course. It had to be postponed to the following year.

By now he was living not with Tanya, but with another woman, who was two years older than he was, and who looked after him as though he were a baby. He was in a calm and tranquil state of mind; he readily gave in to her, and when Varvara Nikolaevna — that was the name of his friend — decided to take him to the Crimea, he agreed, though he had a presentiment that no good would come of the trip.

They reached Sevastopol in the evening and stopped at an hotel to rest and go on the next day to Yalta. They were both exhausted by the journey. Varvara Nikolaevna had some tea, went to bed and was soon asleep. But Kovrin did not go to bed. An hour before starting for the station, he had received a letter from Tanya, and had not brought himself to open it, and now it was lying in his coat pocket, and the thought of it excited him disagree-

though everything seemed de
big, staring, intelligent eyes —
roused in him nothing but pity
self. The handwriting on th
him how cruel and unjust he h
fore, how he had worked off his
emptiness, his boredom, his lo
satisfaction with life by revengi
in no way to blame. He reme
had torn up his dissertation a
had written during his illnes
thrown them out of window, a
had fluttered in the wind and
and flowers. In every line of
utterly groundless pretension, sl
gance, megalomania; and the
though he were reading a des
But when the last manuscript h
sent flying out of window, he f
suddenly bitter and angry; he
said a great many unpleasant
God, how he had tormented her
to cause her pain, he told her
played a very unattractive par

room, and, in his despair, could not utter a word, could only stamp and make a strange, bellowing sound as though he had lost the power of speech, and Tanya, looking at her father, had uttered a heart-rending shriek and had fallen into a swoon. It was hideous.

All this came back into his memory as he looked at the familiar writing. Kovrin went out on to the balcony; it was still warm weather and there was a smell of the sea. The wonderful bay reflected the moonshine and the lights, and was of a colour for which it was difficult to find a name. It was a soft and tender blending of dark blue and green; in places the water was like blue vitriol, and in places it seemed as though the moonlight were liquefied and filling the bay instead of water. And what harmony of colours, what an atmosphere of peace, calm, and sublimity!

In the lower storey under the balcony the windows were probably open, for women's voices and laughter could be heard distinctly. Apparently there was an evening party.

Kovrin made an effort, tore open the envelope, and, going back into his room, read:

"My father is just dead. I owe that to you, for you have killed him. Our garden is being ruined; strangers are managing it already — that is, the very thing is happening that poor father dreaded. That, too, I owe to you. I hate you with my whole soul, and I hope you may soon perish. Oh, how wretched I am! Insufferable anguish is burning my soul. . . .

easiness that was akin to t
laevna was asleep behind th
hear her breathing. From
the sounds of laughter and
felt as though in the whole hc
soul but him. Because Tan
sorrow, had cursed him in h
his perdition, he felt eerie
riedly at the door, as though
uncomprehended force which
wrought such havoc in his life
near him might come into the
once more.

He knew by experience tha
out of hand the best thing
work. He must sit down t
himself, at all costs, to concen
one thought. He took fror
manuscript containing a sket
the nature of a compilation,
in case he should find it dull
work. He sat down to the
ing at this plan, and it seemec
peaceful indifferent mood w

place blessings it can give a man. For instance, to gain, before forty, a university chair, to be an ordinary professor, to expound ordinary and second-hand thoughts in dull, heavy, insipid language — in fact, to gain the position of a mediocre learned man, he, Kovrin, had had to study for fifteen years, to work day and night, to endure a terrible mental illness, to experience an unhappy marriage, and to do a great number of stupid and unjust things which it would have been pleasant not to remember. Kovrin recognised clearly, now, that he was a mediocrity, and readily resigned himself to it, as he considered that every man ought to be satisfied with what he is.

The plan of the volume would have soothed him completely, but the torn letter showed white on the floor and prevented him from concentrating his attention. He got up from the table, picked up the pieces of the letter and threw them out of window, but there was a light wind blowing from the sea, and the bits of paper were scattered on the window-sill. Again he was overcome by uneasiness akin to terror, and he felt as though in the whole hotel there were no living soul but himself. . . . He went out on the balcony. The bay, like a living thing, looked at him with its multitude of light blue, dark blue, turquoise and fiery eyes, and seemed beckoning to him. And it really was hot and oppressive, and it would not have been amiss to have a bathe.

Suddenly in the lower storey under the balcony a violin began playing, and two soft feminine voices began singing. It was something familiar. The song was about a maiden, full of sick fancies, who

at his heart, and a thrill of
light he had so long forgot
breast.

A tall black column, like a
spout, appeared on the furth
moved with fearful rapidity
the hotel, growing smaller
and Kovrin only just had tim
to let it pass. . . . The mon
black eyebrows, barefoot, hi
breast, floated by him, and s
of the room.

"Why did you not belie
proachfully, looking affectio
you had believed me then, t
you would not have spent the
and so wretchedly."

Kovrin already believed th
chosen and a genius; he vivi
sations with the monk in the
but the blood flowed from his
and not knowing what he w
hands over his breast, and his
blood. He tried to call Va

He fell on the floor, and propping himself on his arms, called again:

"Tanya!"

He called Tanya, called to the great garden with the gorgeous flowers sprinkled with dew, called to the park, the pines with their shaggy roots, the rye-field, his marvellous learning, his youth, courage, joy — called to life, which was so lovely. He saw on the floor near his face a great pool of blood, and was too weak to utter a word, but an unspeakable, infinite happiness flooded his whole being. Below, under the balcony, they were playing the serenade, and the black monk whispered to him that he was a genius, and that he was dying only because his frail human body had lost its balance and could no longer serve as the mortal garb of genius.

When Varvara Nikolaevna woke up and came out from behind the screen, Kovrin was dead, and a blissful smile was set upon his face.

VOLODYA

VOLODYA

AT five o'clock one Sunday afternoon in summer, Volodya, a plain, shy, sickly-looking lad of seventeen, was sitting in the arbour of the Shumihins' country villa, feeling dreary. His despondent thoughts flowed in three directions. In the first place, he had next day, Monday, an examination in mathematics; he knew that if he did not get through the written examination on the morrow, he would be expelled, for he had already been two years in the sixth form and had two and three-quarter marks for algebra in his annual report. In the second place, his presence at the villa of the Shumihins, a wealthy family with aristocratic pretensions, was a continual source of mortification to his amour-propre. It seemed to him that Madame Shumihin looked upon him and his *maman* as poor relations and dependents, that they laughed at his *maman* and did not respect her. He had on one occasion accidentally overheard Madame Shumihin, in the verandah, telling her cousin Anna Fyodorovna that his *maman* still tried to look young and got herself up, that she never paid her losses at cards, and had a partiality for other people's shoes and tobacco. Every day Volodya besought his *maman* not to go to the Shumihins', and drew a picture of the humiliating part she played with these gentlefolk. He tried to

In the third place, the youth could i
instant get rid of a strange, unpleasant fe
was absolutely new to him. . . . It see
that he was in love with Anna Fyod
Shumihins' cousin, who was staying
She was a vivacious, loud-voiced, laug
healthy, and vigorous lady of thirty,
cheeks, plump shoulders, a plump round
continual smile on her thin lips. She
young nor beautiful — Volodya knew th
well; but for some reason he could not h
of her, looking at her while she shrugge
shoulders and moved her flat back as
croquet, or after prolonged laughter a
up and down stairs, sank into a low cha
closing her eyes and gasping for breath
that she was stifling and could not breath
married. Her husband, a staid and dig
tect, came once a week to the villa, sl
and returned to town. Volodya's stra
had begun with his conceiving an un
hatred for the architect, and feeling re
time he went back to town.

was what the Shumihins called Anna Fyodorovna), to hear her laughter and the rustle of her dress. . . . This desire was not like the pure, poetic love of which he read in novels and about which he dreamed every night when he went to bed; it was strange, incomprehensible; he was ashamed of it, and afraid of it as of something very wrong and impure, something which it was disagreeable to confess even to himself.

"It's not love," he said to himself. "One can't fall in love with women of thirty who are married. It is only a little intrigue. . . . Yes, an intrigue. . . ."

Pondering on the "intrigue," he thought of his uncontrollable shyness, his lack of moustache, his freckles, his narrow eyes, and put himself in his imagination side by side with Nyuta, and the juxtaposition seemed to him impossible; then he made haste to imagine himself bold, handsome, witty, dressed in the latest fashion.

When his dreams were at their height, as he sat huddled together and looking at the ground in a dark corner of the arbour, he heard the sound of light footsteps. Some one was coming slowly along the avenue. Soon the steps stopped and something white gleamed in the entrance.

"Is there any one here?" asked a woman's voice.

Volodya recognised the voice, and raised his head in a fright.

"Who is here?" asked Nyuta, going into the arbour. "Ah, it is you, Volodya? What are you doing here? Thinking? And how can you go on

ing, thinking, thinking? . . . That's the wa
out of your mind!"
lodya got up and looked in a dazed way a
a. She had only just come back from bathing
her shoulder there was hanging a sheet an
ugh towel, and from under the white silk ker
on her head he could see the wet hair stickin
r forehead. There was the cool damp smel
e bath-house and of almond soap still hangin
her. She was out of breath from runnin
ly. The top button of her blouse was undone
at the boy saw her throat and bosom.
Why don't you say something?" said Nyuta
ng Volodya up and down. "It's not polite t
ent when a lady talks to you. What a clums
you are though, Volodya! You always sit

Volodya listened and scratched his forehead in acute and painful irresolution.

"It's only very proud people who are silent and love solitude," Nyuta went on, pulling his hand away from his forehead. "You are proud, Volodya. Why do you look at me like that from under your brows? Look me straight in the face, if you please! Yes, now then, clumsy seal!"

Volodya made up his mind to speak. Wanting to smile, he twitched his lower lip, blinked, and again put his hand to his forehead.

"I . . . I love you," he said.

Nyuta raised her eyebrows in surprise, and laughed.

"What do I hear?" she sang, as prima-donnas sing at the opera when they hear something awful. "What? What did you say? Say it again, say it again. . . ."

"I . . . I love you!" repeated Volodya.

And without his will's having any part in his action, without reflection or understanding, he took half a step towards Nyuta and clutched her by the arm. Everything was dark before his eyes, and tears came into them. The whole world was turned into one big, rough towel which smelt of the bath-house.

"Bravo, bravo!" he heard a merry laugh. "Why don't you speak? I want you to speak! Well?"

Seeing that he was not prevented from holding her arm, Volodya glanced at Nyuta's laughing face, and clumsily, awkwardly, put both arms round her

his hands meeting behind her back. He held
und the waist with both arms, while, putting
nds up to her head, showing the dimples in
ows, she set her hair straight under the ker-
nd said in a calm voice:
ou must be tactful, polite, charming, and you
y become that under feminine influence. But
wicked, angry face you have! You must
ugh. . . . Yes, Volodya, don't be surly; you
ng and will have plenty of time for philoso-
. Come, let go of me; I am going. Let

hout effort she released her waist, and, hum-
omething, walked out of the arbour. Vo-
vas left alone. He smoothed his hair, smiled,
lked three times to and fro across the arbour,

"Ah! only to get away from here as soon as possible," he thought, clutching his head. "My God! as soon as possible."

The train by which Volodya was to go back with his *maman* was at eight-forty. There were three hours before the train started, but he would with pleasure have gone to the station at once without waiting for his *maman.*

At eight o'clock he went to the house. His whole figure was expressive of determination: what would be, would be! He made up his mind to go in boldly, to look them straight in the face, to speak in a loud voice, regardless of everything.

He crossed the terrace, the big hall and the drawing-room, and there stopped to take breath. He could hear them in the dining-room, drinking tea. Madame Shumihin, *maman,* and Nyuta were talking and laughing about something.

Volodya listened.

"I assure you!" said Nyuta. "I could not believe my eyes! When he began declaring his passion and — just imagine! — put his arms round my waist, I should not have recognised him. And you know he has a way with him! When he told me he was in love with me, there was something brutal in his face, like a Circassian."

"Really!" gasped *maman,* going off into a peal of laughter. "Really! How he does remind me of his father!"

Volodya ran back and dashed out into the open air.

"How could they talk of it aloud!" he wondered

He walked three times up and dow
grew a little calmer, and went into th
"Why didn't you come in in ti
Madame Shumihin asked sternly.
"I am sorry, it's . . . it's time f
he muttered, not raising his eyes.
eight o'clock!"
"You go alone, my dear," said h
guidly. "I am staying the night wit
bye, my dear. . . . Let me make tl
cross over you."
She made the sign of the cross ove
said in French, turning to Nyuta:
"He's rather like Lermontov . .
Saying good-bye after a fashion, v
any one in the face, Volodya went ou
room. Ten minutes later he was wa
road to the station, and was glad o
felt neither frightened nor ashamed
freely and easily.
About half a mile from the statio
on a stone by the side of the road, an
sun, which was half hidden behind a b
were lights already here and there

coming little by little. The darkness of the arbour, the footsteps, the smell of the bath-house, the laughter, and the waist — all these rose with amazing vividness before his imagination, and all this was no longer so terrible and important as before.

"It's of no consequence. . . . She did not pull her hand away, and laughed when I held her by the waist," he thought. "So she must have liked it. If she had disliked it she would have been angry. . . ."

And now Volodya felt sorry that he had not had more boldness there in the arbour. He felt sorry that he was so stupidly going away, and he was by now persuaded that if the same thing happened again he would be bolder and look at it more simply.

And it would not be difficult for the opportunity to occur again. They used to stroll about for a long time after supper at the Shumihins'. If Volodya went for a walk with Nyuta in the dark garden, there would be an opportunity!

"I will go back," he thought, "and will go by the morning train to-morrow. . . . I will say I have missed the train."

And he turned back. . . . Madame Shumihin, *maman,* Nyuta, and one of the nieces were sitting on the verandah, playing *vint.* When Volodya told them the lie that he had missed the train, they were uneasy that he might be late for the examination next day, and advised him to get up early. All the while they were playing he sat on one side, greedily watching Nyuta and waiting. . . . He already had

prepared in his mind: he would go up to
in the dark, would take her by the hand, then
embrace her; there would be no need to say
g, as both of them would understand without

after supper the ladies did not go for a walk
garden, but went on playing cards. They
till one o'clock at night, and then broke up
bed.

ow stupid it all is!" Volodya thought with
n as he got into bed. "But never mind; I'll
l to-morrow . . . to-morrow in the arbour.
n't matter. . . ."

did not attempt to go to sleep, but sat in bed,
g his knees and thinking. All thought of the
ation was hateful to him. He had already

get light, the door creaked cautiously and his *maman* came into the room.

"Aren't you asleep?" she asked, yawning. "Go to sleep; I have only come in for a minute. . . . I am only fetching the drops. . . ."

"What for?"

"Poor Lili has got spasms again. Go to sleep, my child, your examination's to-morrow. . . ."

She took a bottle of something out of the cupboard, went to the window, read the label, and went away.

"Marya Leontyevna, those are not the drops!" Volodya heard a woman's voice, a minute later. "That's convallaria, and Lili wants morphine. Is your son asleep? Ask him to look for it. . . ."

It was Nyuta's voice. Volodya turned cold. He hurriedly put on his trousers, flung his coat over his shoulders, and went to the door.

"Do you understand? Morphine," Nyuta explained in a whisper. "There must be a label in Latin. Wake Volodya; he will find it."

Maman opened the door and Volodya caught sight of Nyuta. She was wearing the same loose wrapper in which she had gone to bathe. Her hair hung loose and disordered on her shoulders, her face looked sleepy and dark in the half-light. . . .

"Why, Volodya is not asleep," she said. "Volodya, look in the cupboard for the morphine, there's a dear! What a nuisance Lili is! She has always something the matter."

Maman muttered something, yawned, and went away.

"Look for it," said Nyuta. "Why are you standing still?"

Volodya went to the cupboard, knelt down, and began looking through the bottles and boxes of medicine. His hands were trembling, and he had a feeling in his chest and stomach as though cold waves were running all over his inside. He felt suffocated and giddy from the smell of ether, carbolic acid, and various drugs, which he quite unnecessarily snatched up with his trembling fingers and spilled in so doing.

"I believe *maman* has gone," he thought. "That's a good thing . . . a good thing. . . ."

"Will you be quick?" said Nyuta, drawling.

"In a minute. . . . Here, I believe this is morphine," said Volodya, reading on one of the labels the word "morph . . ." "Here it is!"

Nyuta was standing in the doorway in such a way that one foot was in his room and one was in the passage. She was tidying her hair, which was difficult to put in order because it was so thick and long, and looked absent-mindedly at Volodya. In her loose wrap, with her sleepy face and her hair down, in the dim light that came into the white sky not yet lit by the sun, she seemed to Volodya captivating, magnificent. . . . Fascinated, trembling all over, and remembering with relish how he had held that exquisite body in his arms in the arbour, he handed her the bottle and said:

"How wonderful you are!"

"What?"

She came into the room.

"What?" she asked, smiling.

He was silent and looked at her, then, just as in the arbour, he took her hand, and she looked at him with a smile and waited for what would happen next.

"I love you," he whispered.

She left off smiling, thought a minute, and said:

"Wait a little; I think somebody is coming. Oh, these schoolboys!" she said in an undertone, going to the door and peeping out into the passage. "No, there is no one to be seen. . . ."

She came back.

Then it seemed to Volodya that the room, Nyuta, the sunrise and himself — all melted together in one sensation of acute, extraordinary, incredible bliss, for which one might give up one's whole life and face eternal torments. . . . But half a minute passed and all that vanished. Volodya saw only a fat, plain face, distorted by an expression of repulsion, and he himself suddenly felt a loathing for what had happened.

"I must go away, though," said Nyuta, looking at Volodya with disgust. "What a wretched, ugly . . . fie, ugly duckling!"

How unseemly her long hair, her loose wrap, her steps, her voice seemed to Volodya now! . . .

"'Ugly duckling' . . ." he thought after she had gone away. "I really am ugly . . . everything is ugly."

The sun was rising, the birds were singing loudly; he could hear the gardener walking in the garden and the creaking of his wheelbarrow . . . and soon afterwards he heard the lowing of the cows and the

him.

When the footman came to wake l
morning train, he pretended to be asleep

"Bother it! Damn it all!" he thou

He got up between ten and eleven.

Combing his hair before the lookin
looking at his ugly face, pale from his sle
he thought:

"It's perfectly true . . . an ugly du

When *maman* saw him and was horr
was not at his examination, Volodya said

"I overslept myself, *maman*. . . .
worry, I will get a medical certificate."

Madame Shumihin and Nyuta wake
o'clock. Volodya heard Madame Shu
her window with a bang, heard Nyuta g
peal of laughter in reply to her coarse
saw the door open and a string of niece
toadies (among the latter was his *mam*
lunch, caught a glimpse of Nyuta's fre
laughing face, and, beside her, the blacl
beard of her husband the architect, wl
arrived.

them — so it seemed to Volodya. It also seemed to him that Nyuta laughed loudly on purpose, and kept glancing in his direction to give him to understand that the memory of the night did not trouble her in the least, and that she was not aware of the presence at table of the "ugly duckling."

At four o'clock Volodya drove to the station with his *maman*. Foul memories, the sleepless night, the prospect of expulsion from school, the stings of conscience — all roused in him now an oppressive, gloomy anger. He looked at *maman's* sharp profile, at her little nose, and at the raincoat which was a present from Nyuta, and muttered:

"Why do you powder? It's not becoming at your age! You make yourself up, don't pay your debts at cards, smoke other people's tobacco. . . . It's hateful! I don't love you . . . I don't love you!"

He was insulting her, and she moved her little eyes about in alarm, flung up her hands, and whispered in horror:

"What are you saying, my dear! Good gracious! the coachman will hear! Be quiet or the coachman will hear! He can overhear everything."

"I don't love you . . . I don't love you!" he went on breathlessly. "You've no soul and no morals. . . . Don't dare to wear that raincoat! Do you hear? Or else I will tear it into rags. . . ."

"Control yourself, my child," *maman* wept; "the coachman can hear!"

"And where is my father's fortune? Where is your money? You have wasted it all. I am not

d of being poor, but I am ashamed of having
mother. . . . When my schoolfellows ask
s about you, I always blush."
e train they had to pass two stations before
ched the town. Volodya spent all the time
little platform between two carriages and
l all over. He did not want to go into the
tment because there the mother he hated was
He hated himself, hated the ticket col-
the smoke from the engine, the cold to which
buted his shivering. And the heavier the
on his heart, the more strongly he felt that
ere in the world, among some people, there
ure, honourable, warm, refined life, full of
ffection, gaiety, and serenity. . . . He felt
l was so intensely miserable that one of the
ers after looking in his face attentively

mother's room or in the "general room," as the large room in which the boarders assembled at dinner-time and in the evening was called.

On reaching home he lay down on his sofa and put the quilt over him to stop his shivering. The cardboard hat-boxes, the wicker baskets, and the other rubbish, reminded him that he had not a room of his own, that he had no refuge in which he could get away from his mother, from her visitors, and from the voices that were floating up from the "general room." The satchel and the books lying about in the corners reminded him of the examination he had missed. . . . For some reason there came into his mind, quite inappropriately, Mentone, where he had lived with his father when he was seven years old; he thought of Biarritz and two little English girls with whom he ran about on the sand. . . . He tried to recall to his memory the colour of the sky, the sea, the height of the waves, and his mood at the time, but he could not succeed. The English girls flitted before his imagination as though they were living; all the rest was a medley of images that floated away in confusion. . . .

"No; it's cold here," thought Volodya. He got up, put on his overcoat, and went into the "general room."

There they were drinking tea. There were three people at the samovar: *maman;* an old lady with tortoiseshell pince-nez, who gave music lessons; and Avgustin Mihalitch, an elderly and very stout Frenchman, who was employed at a perfumery factory.

have had no dinner to-day," said *maman*. "I to send the maid to buy some bread."

unyasha!" shouted the Frenchman.

ppeared that the maid had been sent out some- by the lady of the house.

h, that's of no consequence," said the French- with a broad smile. "I will go for some myself at once. Oh, it's nothing."

laid his strong, pungent cigar in a conspicuous put on his hat and went out. After he had way *maman* began telling the music teacher e had been staying at the Shumihins', and how y they welcomed her.

li Shumihin is a relation of mine, you know," id. "Her late husband, General Shumihin, cousin of my husband. And she was a Baron-

into her handkerchief, affecting to sneeze, and *maman* began to cry.

"Where can I go?" thought Volodya.

He had been in the street already; he was ashamed to go to his schoolfellows. Again, quite incongruously, he remembered the two little English girls. . . . He paced up and down the "general room," and went into Avgustin Mihalitch's room. Here there was a strong smell of ethereal oils and glycerine soap. On the table, in the window, and even on the chairs, there were a number of bottles, glasses, and wineglasses containing fluids of various colours. Volodya took up from the table a newspaper, opened it and read the title *Figaro*. . . . There was a strong and pleasant scent about the paper. Then he took a revolver from the table. . . .

"There, there! Don't take any notice of it." The music teacher was comforting *maman* in the next room. "He is young! Young people of his age never restrain themselves. One must resign oneself to that."

"No, Yevgenya Andreyevna; he's too spoilt," said *maman* in a singsong voice. "He has no one in authority over him, and I am weak and can do nothing. Oh, I am unhappy!"

Volodya put the muzzle of the revolver to his mouth, felt something like a trigger or spring, and pressed it with his finger. . . . Then felt something else projecting, and once more pressed it. Taking the muzzle out of his mouth, he wiped it with the lapel of his coat, looked at the lock. He had never in his life taken a weapon in his hand before. . . .

I believe one ought to raise this . . ." he re-
d. "Yes, it seems so."
ygustin Mihalitch went into the "general
," and with a laugh began telling them about
thing. Volodya put the muzzle in his mouth
, pressed it with his teeth, and pressed some-
with his fingers. There was a sound of a
. . . Something hit Volodya in the back of his
with terrible violence, and he fell on the table
his face downwards among the bottles and
es. Then he saw his father, as in Mentone, in
-hat with a wide black band on it, wearing
ning for some lady, suddenly seize him by both
s, and they fell headlong into a very deep, dark

hen everything was blurred and vanished.

AN ANONYMOUS STORY

AN ANONYMOUS STORY

I

THROUGH causes which it is not the time to go into in detail, I had to enter the service of a Petersburg official called Orlov, in the capacity of a footman. He was about five and thirty, and was called Georgy * Ivanitch.

I entered this Orlov's service on account of his father, a prominent political man, whom I looked upon as a serious enemy of my cause. I reckoned that, living with the son, I should — from the conversations I should hear, and from the letters and papers I should find on the table — learn every detail of the father's plans and intentions.

As a rule at eleven o'clock in the morning the electric bell rang in my footman's quarters to let me know that my master was awake. When I went into the bedroom with his polished shoes and brushed clothes, Georgy Ivanitch would be sitting in his bed with a face that looked, not drowsy, but rather exhausted by sleep, and he would gaze off in one direction without any sign of satisfaction at having waked. I helped him to dress, and he let me do it with an air of reluctance without speaking or noticing my presence; then with his head wet with washing, smelling of fresh scent, he used to go into

* Both *g's* hard, as in "Gorgon"; *e* like *ai* in *rain*.

ining-room to drink his coffee. He used to sit
table, sipping his coffee and glancing through
ewspapers, while the maid Polya and I stood
ctfully at the door gazing at him. Two
n-up persons had to stand watching with the
st attention a third drinking coffee and munch-
sks. It was probably ludicrous and grotesque,
saw nothing humiliating in having to stand
he door, though I was quite as well born and
ducated as Orlov himself.

as in the first stage of consumption, and was
ng from something else, possibly even more
s than consumption. I don't know whether
s the effect of my illness or of an incipient
e in my philosophy of life of which I was not
ous at the time, but I was, day by day, more

the Bay of Bengal, one is thrilled with ecstasy and at the same time homesick. I dreamed of mountains, women, music, and, with the curiosity of a child, I looked into people's faces, listened to their voices. And when I stood at the door and watched Orlov sipping his coffee, I felt not a footman, but a man interested in everything in the world, even in Orlov.

In appearance Orlov was a typical Petersburger, with narrow shoulders, a long waist, sunken temples, eyes of an indefinite colour, and scanty, dingy-coloured hair, beard and moustaches. His face had a stale, unpleasant look, though it was studiously cared for. It was particularly unpleasant when he was asleep or lost in thought. It is not worth while describing a quite ordinary appearance; besides, Petersburg is not Spain, and a man's appearance is not of much consequence even in love affairs, and is only of value to a handsome footman or coachman. I have spoken of Orlov's face and hair only because there was something in his appearance worth mentioning. When Orlov took a newspaper or book, whatever it might be, or met people, whoever they might be, an ironical smile began to come into his eyes, and his whole countenance assumed an expression of light mockery in which there was no malice. Before reading or hearing anything he always had his irony in readiness, as a savage has his shield. It was an habitual irony, like some old liquor brewed years ago, and now it came into his face probably without any participation of his will, as it were by reflex action. But of that later.

Soon after midday he took his portfolio, full of

, and drove to his office. He dined away
ome and returned after eight o'clock. I used
t the lamp and candles in his study, and he
sit down in a low chair with his legs stretched
another chair, and, reclining in that position,
begin reading. Almost every day he brought
books with him or received parcels of them
he shops, and there were heaps of books in
languages, to say nothing of Russian, which
read and thrown away, in the corners of my
and under my bed. He read with extraordi-
apidity. They say: "Tell me what you read,
l tell you who you are." That may be true,
was absolutely impossible to judge of Orlov
at he read. It was a regular hotchpotch.
phy, French novels, political economy,

looked ill-humoured and exhausted. When I followed him into his study to light the candles, he said to me:

"There's a nasty smell in the flat."

"No, the air is fresh," I answered.

"I tell you, there's a bad smell," he answered irritably.

"I open the movable panes every day."

"Don't argue, blockhead!" he shouted.

I was offended, and was on the point of answering, and goodness knows how it would have ended if Polya, who knew her master better than I did, had not intervened.

"There really is a disagreeable smell," she said, raising her eyebrows. "What can it be from? Stepan, open the pane in the drawing-room, and light the fire."

With much bustle and many exclamations, she went through all the rooms, rustling her skirts and squeezing the sprayer with a hissing sound. And Orlov was still out of humour; he was obviously restraining himself not to vent his ill-temper aloud. He was sitting at the table and rapidly writing a letter. After writing a few lines he snorted angrily and tore it up, then he began writing again.

"Damn them all!" he muttered. "They expect me to have an abnormal memory!"

At last the letter was written; he got up from the table and said, turning to me:

"Go to Znamensky Street and deliver this letter to Zinaida Fyodorovna Krasnovsky in person. But first ask the porter whether her husband — that is,

Krasnovsky — has returned yet. If he has re-
ed, don't deliver the letter, but come back.
t a minute! . . . If she asks whether I have
one here, tell her that there have been two gentle-
here since eight o'clock, writing something."
drove to Znamensky Street. The porter told
hat Mr. Krasnovsky had not yet come in, and
ade my way up to the third storey. The door
opened by a tall, stout, drab-coloured flunkey
black whiskers, who in a sleepy, churlish, and
hetic voice, such as only flunkeys use in address-
ther flunkeys, asked me what I wanted. Before
d time to answer, a lady dressed in black came
iedly into the hall. She screwed up her eyes
looked at me.
Is Zinaida Fyodorovna at home?" I asked.

the letter as she walked, she went noiselessly out.

I saw few women at that time, and this lady of whom I had a passing glimpse made an impression on me. As I walked home I recalled her face and the delicate fragrance about her, and fell to dreaming. By the time I got home Orlov had gone out.

II

And so my relations with my employer were quiet and peaceful, but still the unclean and degrading element which I so dreaded on becoming a footman was conspicuous and made itself felt every day. I did not get on with Polya. She was a well-fed and pampered hussy who adored Orlov because he was a gentleman and despised me because I was a footman. Probably, from the point of view of a real flunkey or cook, she was fascinating, with her red cheeks, her turned-up nose, her coquettish glances, and the plumpness, one might almost say fatness, of her person. She powdered her face, coloured her lips and eyebrows, laced herself in, and wore a bustle, and a bangle made of coins. She walked with little tripping steps; as she walked she swayed, or, as they say, wriggled her shoulders and back. The rustle of her skirts, the creaking of her stays, the jingle of her bangle and the vulgar smell of lip salve, toilet vinegar, and scent stolen from her master, aroused in me whilst I was doing the rooms with her in the morning a sensation as though I were taking part with her in some abomination.

Either because I did not steal as she did, or be-

I displayed no desire to become her lover,
she probably looked upon as an insult, or per-
because she felt that I was a man of a different
, she hated me from the first day. My inex-
nce, my appearance — so unlike a flunkey —
ny illness, seemed to her pitiful and excited her
st. I had a bad cough at that time, and some-
at night I prevented her from sleeping, as our
s were only divided by a wooden partition, and
morning she said to me:
Again you didn't let me sleep. You ought to
hospital instead of in service."
e so genuinely believed that I was hardly a
n being, but something infinitely below her, that,
he Roman matrons who were not ashamed to
before their slaves, she sometimes went about
presence in nothing but her chemise

In my novel surroundings I felt very uncomfortable for the first week at Orlov's before I got used to being addressed as "thou," and being constantly obliged to tell lies (saying "My master is not at home" when he was). In my flunkey's swallow-tail I felt as though I were in armour. But I grew accustomed to it in time. Like a genuine footman, I waited at table, tidied the rooms, ran and drove about on errands of all sorts. When Orlov did not want to keep an appointment with Zinaida Fyodorovna, or when he forgot that he had promised to go and see her, I drove to Znamensky Street, put a letter into her hands and told a lie. And the result of it all was quite different from what I had expected when I became a footman. Every day of this new life of mine was wasted for me and my cause, as Orlov never spoke of his father, nor did his visitors, and all I could learn of the stateman's doings was, as before, what I could glean from the newspapers or from correspondence with my comrades. The hundreds of notes and papers I used to find in the study and read had not the remotest connection with what I was looking for. Orlov was absolutely uninterested in his father's political work, and looked as though he had never heard of it, or as though his father had long been dead.

III

Every Thursday we had visitors.

I ordered a piece of roast beef from the restaurant and telephoned to Eliseyev's to send us caviare,

se, oysters, and so on. I bought playing-cards. a was busy all day getting ready the tea-things the dinner service. To tell the truth, this spurt ctivity came as a pleasant change in our idle life, Thursdays were for us the most interesting days. nly three visitors used to come. The most im- ant and perhaps the most interesting was the one d Pekarsky — a tall, lean man of five and forty, a long hooked nose, with a big black beard, a bald patch on his head. His eyes were large prominent, and his expression was grave and ghtful like that of a Greek philosopher. He on the board of management of some railway, also had some post in a bank; he was a con- ng lawyer in some important Government in- tion, and had business relations with a large ber of private persons as a trustee, chairman of

secrets for him; he was a most skilful pleader in civil suits, and it was not easy to get the better of him at law. But that exceptional intelligence could not grasp many things which are understood even by some stupid people. For instance, he was absolutely unable to understand why people are depressed, why they weep, shoot themselves, and even kill others; why they fret about things that do not affect them personally, and why they laugh when they read Gogol or Shtchedrin. . . . Everything abstract, everything belonging to the domain of thought and feeling, was to him boring and incomprehensible, like music to one who has no ear. He looked at people simply from the business point of view, and divided them into competent and incompetent. No other classification existed for him. Honesty and rectitude were only signs of competence. Drinking, gambling, and debauchery were permissible, but must not be allowed to interfere with business. Believing in God was rather stupid, but religion ought to be safeguarded, as the common people must have some principle to restrain them, otherwise they would not work. Punishment is only necessary as a deterrent. There was no need to go away for holidays, as it was just as nice in town. And so on. He was a widower and had no children, but lived on a large scale, as though he had a family, and paid three thousand roubles a year for his flat.

The second visitor, Kukushkin, an actual civil councillor though a young man, was short, and was conspicuous for his extremely unpleasant appearance, which was due to the disproportion between his fat,

body and his lean little face. His lips were ered up suavely, and his little trimmed mous- es looked as though they had been fixed on with He was a man with the manners of a lizard. lid not walk, but, as it were, crept along with tiny , squirming and sniggering, and when he hed he showed his teeth. He was a clerk on al commissions, and did nothing, though he re- d a good salary, especially in the summer, when al and lucrative jobs were found for him. He a man of personal ambition, not only to the ow of his bones, but more fundamentally — he last drop of his blood; but even in his am- ns he was petty and did not rely on himself, but building his career on the chance favour flung by his superiors. For the sake of obtaining

places he would slavishly grovel. When at supper they talked of love and women, he pretended to be a subtle and perverse voluptuary. As a rule, one may say, Petersburg rakes are fond of talking of their abnormal tastes. Some young actual civil councillor is perfectly satisfied with the embraces of his cook or of some unhappy street-walker on the Nevsky Prospect, but to listen to him you would think he was contaminated by all the vices of East and West combined, that he was an honourary member of a dozen iniquitous secret societies and was already marked by the police. Kukushkin lied about himself in an unconscionable way, and they did not exactly disbelieve him, but paid little heed to his incredible stories.

The third guest was Gruzin, the son of a worthy and learned general; a man of Orlov's age, with long hair, short-sighted eyes, and gold spectacles. I remember his long white fingers, that looked like a pianist's; and, indeed, there was something of a musician, of a virtuoso, about his whole figure. The first violins in orchestras look just like that. He used to cough, suffered from migraine, and seemed altogether invalidish and delicate. Probably at home he was dressed and undressed like a baby. He had finished at the College of Jurisprudence, and had at first served in the Department of Justice, then he was transferred to the Senate; he left that, and through patronage had received a post in the Department of Crown Estates, and had soon afterwards given that up. In my time he was serving in Orlov's department; he was his head-clerk, but he said that

hould soon exchange into the Department of
ce again. He took his duties and his shifting
t from one post to another with exceptional
, and when people talked before him seriously
rades in the service, decorations, salaries, he
d good-naturedly and repeated Prutkov's aphor-
"It's only in the Government service you
the truth." He had a little wife with a wrin-
face, who was very jealous of him, and five
y-looking children. He was unfaithful to his
he was only fond of his children when he saw
, and on the whole was rather indifferent to his
y, and made fun of them. He and his family
d on credit, borrowing wherever they could at
opportunity, even from his superiors in the
and porters in people's houses. His was a

of his daily life he had not time to understand and appreciate it. He played a little on the piano. Sometimes he would sit down at the piano, play a chord or two, and begin singing softly:

"What does the coming day bring to me?"

But at once, as though afraid, he would get up and walk from the piano.

The visitors usually arrived about ten o'clock. They played cards in Orlov's study, and Polya and I handed them tea. It was only on these occasions that I could gauge the full sweetness of a flunkey's life. Standing for four or five hours at the door, watching that no one's glass should be empty, changing the ash-trays, running to the table to pick up the chalk or a card when it was dropped, and, above all, standing, waiting, being attentive without venturing to speak, to cough, to smile — is harder, I assure you, is harder than the hardest of field labour. I have stood on watch at sea for four hours at a stretch on stormy winter nights, and to my thinking it is an infinitely easier duty.

They used to play cards till two, sometimes till three o'clock at night, and then, stretching, they would go into the dining-room to supper, or, as Orlov said, for a snack of something. At supper there was conversation. It usually began by Orlov's speaking with laughing eyes of some acquaintance, of some book he had lately been reading, of a new appointment or Government scheme. Kukushkin, always ingratiating, would fall into his tone, and what followed was to me, in my mood at that time,

lting exhibition. The irony of Orlov and his
s knew no bounds, and spared no one and
g. If they spoke of religion, it was with
they spoke of philosophy, of the significance
ject of life — irony again, if any one began
he peasantry, it was with irony.

re is in Petersburg a species of men whose
ity it is to jeer at every aspect of life; they
even pass by a starving man or a suicide with-
ying something vulgar. But Orlov and his
s did not jeer or make jokes, they talked ironi-
They used to say that there was no God, and
ality was completely lost at death; the immor-
ly existed in the French Academy. Real good
t and could not possibly exist, as its existence
nditional upon human perfection, which was a

that there was no wife from whom one could not, with practice, obtain caresses without leaving her drawing-room while her husband was sitting in his study close by; that girls in their teens were perverted and knew everything. Orlov had preserved a letter of a schoolgirl of fourteen: on her way home from school she had "hooked an officer on the Nevsky," who had, it appears, taken her home with him, and had only let her go late in the evening; and she hastened to write about this to her school friend to share her joy with her. They maintained that there was not and never had been such a thing as moral purity, and that evidently it was unnecessary; mankind had so far done very well without it. The harm done by so-called vice was undoubtedly exaggerated. Vices which are punished by our legal code had not prevented Diogenes from being a philosopher and a teacher. Cæsar and Cicero were profligates and at the same time great men. Cato in his old age married a young girl, and yet he was regarded as a great ascetic and a pillar of morality.

At three or four o'clock the party broke up or they went off together out of town, or to Officers' Street, to the house of a certain Varvara Ossipovna, while I retired to my quarters, and was kept awake a long while by coughing and headache.

IV

Three weeks after I entered Orlov's service — it was Sunday morning, I remember — somebody rang the bell. It was not yet eleven, and Orlov

to whom I had taken letters
I don't remember whether I h
sion to answer her — I was
her. And, indeed, she did
In a flash she had darted by m
with the fragrance of her per
ber to this day, she went on,
away. For at least half an ho
nothing. But again some on
was a smartly dressed girl, wl
in a wealthy family, accompan
ter. Both were out of breath
and a dress-basket.

"These are for Zinaida F
girl.

And she went down without
All this was mysterious, and m
deep admiration for the prank
slyly to herself; she looked as
to say, "So that's what we're
about the whole time on tiptc
footsteps; Zinaida Fyodorovna
hall, and seeing me at the doo

rassment about his whole figure. He did not notice me, and my menial opinion did not interest him; he was evidently perturbed and embarrassed before himself, before his inner eye. He dressed, washed, and used his combs and brushes silently and deliberately, as though allowing himself time to think over his position and to reflect, and even from his back one could see he was troubled and dissatisfied with himself.

They drank coffee together. Zinaida Fyodorovna poured out coffee for herself and for Orlov, then she put her elbows on the table and laughed.

"I still can't believe it," she said. "When one has been a long while on one's travels and reaches a hotel at last, it's difficult to believe that one hasn't to go on. It is pleasant to breathe freely."

With the expression of a child who very much wants to be mischievous, she sighed with relief and laughed again.

"You will excuse me," said Orlov, nodding towards the coffee. "Reading at breakfast is a habit I can't get over. But I can do two things at once — read and listen."

"Read away. . . . You shall keep your habits and your freedom. But why do you look so solemn? Are you always like that in the morning, or is it only to-day? Aren't you glad?"

"Yes, I am. But I must own I am a little overwhelmed."

"Why? You had plenty of time to prepare yourself for my descent upon you. I've been threatening to come every day."

...ing tooth out and have done
"Yes, of course."
"Oh, my dear," she said, cl
is well that ends well; but befor
what suffering there has been!
nothing; I am glad, I am happy,
crying than laughing. Yesterd
regular battle," she went on in Fr
knows how wretched I was. B
I can't believe in it. I keep fa
ting here drinking coffee with y
a dream."
Then, still speaking French,
she had broken with her husba
and her eyes were alternately f
laughter while she gazed with
She told him her husband had
but had avoided explanations;
quarrels, and usually at the m
he would suddenly subside into
to his study for fear that in his ex
give utterance to his suspicions o
begin to speak openly. And s
worthless, incapable of taking a

God, when will it end?" and had walked off to his study, she had run after him like a cat after a mouse, and, preventing him from shutting the door, she had cried that she hated him with her whole soul. Then he let her come into the study and she had told him everything, had confessed that she loved some one else, that that some one else was her real, most lawful husband, and that she thought it her true duty to go away to him that very day, whatever might happen, if she were to be shot for it.

"There's a very romantic streak in you," Orlov interrupted, keeping his eyes fixed on the newspaper.

She laughed and went on talking without touching her coffee. Her cheeks glowed and she was a little embarrassed by it, and she looked in confusion at Polya and me. From what she went on to say I learnt that her husband had answered her with threats, reproaches, and finally tears, and that it would have been more accurate to say that she, and not he, had been the attacking party.

"Yes, my dear, so long as I was worked up, everything went all right," she told Orlov; "but as night came on, my spirits sank. You don't believe in God, *George,* but I do believe a little, and I fear retribution. God requires of us patience, magnanimity, self-sacrifice, and here I am refusing to be patient and want to remodel my life to suit myself. Is that right? What if from the point of view of God it's wrong? At two o'clock in the night my husband came to me and said: 'You dare not go away. I'll fetch you back through the police and make a scandal.' And soon afterwards I saw him

trembling with terror. I felt as t
would fall upon me, that I shoul
to the police-station at once, that
cold to me — all sorts of things, ir
I would go into a nunnery or bec
give up all thought of happiness, l
bered that you loved me, and that
dispose of myself without your
everything in my mind was in a t
despair and did not know what
But the sun rose and I grew hap
it was morning I dashed off to yo
been through, dear one! I have
nights!"

She was tired out and excited.
and at the same time she wanted
to laugh and to cry, and to go t
lunch that she might feel her freed

"You have a cosy flat, but I
be small for the two of us," she sai
through all the rooms when they l
fast. "What room will you giv
one because it is next to your stud

terval between lunch and dinner in shopping. Till late at night I was opening the door to messengers and errand-boys from the shops. They bought, among other things, a splendid pier-glass, a dressing-table, a bedstead, and a gorgeous tea service which we did not need. They bought a regular collection of copper saucepans, which we set in a row on the shelf in our cold, empty kitchen. As we were unpacking the tea service Polya's eyes gleamed, and she looked at me two or three times with hatred and fear that I, not she, would be the first to steal one of these charming cups. A lady's writing-table, very expensive and inconvenient, came too. It was evident that Zinaida Fyodorovna contemplated settling with us for good, and meant to make the flat her home.

She came back with Orlov between nine and ten. Full of proud consciousness that she had done something bold and out of the common, passionately in love, and, as she imagined, passionately loved, exhausted, looking forward to a sweet sound sleep, Zinaida Fyodorovna was revelling in her new life. She squeezed her hands together in the excess of her joy, declared that everything was delightful, and swore that she would love Orlov for ever; and these vows, and the naïve, almost childish confidence that she too was deeply loved and would be loved for ever, made her at least five years younger. She talked charming nonsense and laughed at herself.

"There's no other blessing greater than freedom!" she said, forcing herself to say something serious and edifying. "How absurd it is when you

wish every one could be as happy!

But her thoughts immediately tc and she began talking of another fl horses, a trip to Switzerland and I tired by the restaurants and the sh suffering from the same uneasiness i in the morning. He smiled, but r ness than pleasure, and when she s seriously, he agreed ironically: "

"Stepan, make haste and find i she said to me.

"There's no need to be in a hurr arrangements," said Orlov, looki "We must first move into another

We had never had cooking done horses, because, as he said, "he dic about him," and only put up with me in his flat from necessity. Th tic hearth with its everyday joys a offended his taste as vulgarity; to to have children and talk about the like a petty bourgeois. And I b curious to see how these two cre

a good cook and horses; and he, fond of saying to his friends that a decent and orderly man's flat ought, like a warship, to have nothing in it superfluous — no women, no children, no rags, no kitchen utensils.

V

Then I will tell you what happened the following Thursday. That day Zinaida Fyodorovna dined at Content's or Donon's. Orlov returned home alone, and Zinaida Fyodorovna, as I learnt afterwards, went to the Petersburg Side to spend with her old governess the time visitors were with us. Orlov did not care to show her to his friends. I realised that at breakfast, when he began assuring her that for the sake of her peace of mind it was essential to give up his Thursday evenings.

As usual the visitors arrived at almost the same time.

"Is your mistress at home, too?" Kukushkin asked me in a whisper.

"No, sir," I answered.

He went in with a sly, oily look in his eyes, smiling mysteriously, rubbing his hands, which were cold from the frost.

"I have the honour to congratulate you," he said to Orlov, shaking all over with ingratiating, obsequious laughter. "May you increase and multiply like the cedars of Lebanon."

The visitors went into the bedroom, and were extremely jocose on the subject of a pair of feminine slippers, the rug that had been put down between

He who pointed the finger
the knee in homage," Kukushk
times. He had, I may say in
pleasant habit of adorning his
texts in Church Slavonic. "Sh-s
went from the bedroom into th
study. "Sh-sh! Here Gretch
her Faust."

He went off into a peal of
he had said something very ar
Gruzin, expecting that his musi
endure this laughter, but I was n
good-natured face beamed wit
they sat down to play cards, he,
with laughter, said that all th
wanted to complete his domestic
wood pipe and a guitar. Pekars
but from his serious expression
Orlov's new love affair was dist
did not understand what had h

"But how about the husband
plexity, after they had played t

"I don't know," answered Or

Pekarsky combed his big bea

"Altogether, excuse my saying so, I don't understand either of you. You might love each other and break the seventh commandment to your heart's content — that I understand. Yes, that's comprehensible. But why make the husband a party to your secrets? Was there any need for that?"

"But does it make any difference?"

"Hm! . . ." Pekarsky mused. "Well, then, let me tell you this, my friend," he went on, evidently thinking hard: "if I ever marry again and you take it into your head to seduce my wife, please do it so that I don't notice it. It's much more honest to deceive a man than to break up his family life and injure his reputation. I understand. You both imagine that in living together openly you are doing something exceptionally honourable and advanced, but I can't agree with that . . . what shall I call it? . . . romantic attitude?"

Orlov made no reply. He was out of humour and disinclined to talk. Pekarsky, still perplexed, drummed on the table with his fingers, thought a little, and said:

"I don't understand you, all the same. You are not a student and she is not a dressmaker. You are both of you people with means. I should have thought you might have arranged a separate flat for her."

"No, I couldn't. Read Turgenev."

"Why should I read him? I have read him already."

"Turgenev teaches us in his novels that every exalted, noble-minded girl should follow the man

with the woman who loves you is
alted vocation and to refuse tc
Yes, my dear fellow, Turgenev w
suffer for it."

"What Turgenev has got to
understand," said Gruzin softly
his shoulders. "Do you remen
in 'Three Meetings' he is w
evening somewhere in Italy, ar
'*Vieni pensando a me segret*
hummed. "It's fine."

"But she hasn't come to settle
said Pekarsky. "It was your o

"What next! Far from wi
imagined that this would ever h
said she was coming to live wit
was a charming joke on her part

Everybody laughed.

"I couldn't have wished for
Orlov in the tone of a man cc
himself. "I am not a Turgenev
wanted to free Bulgaria I shoul
company. I look upon love prin
of my physical nature, degradin

to be an enjoyment and not a torment, I will try to make it beautiful and to surround it with a mass of illusions. I should never go and see a woman unless I were sure beforehand that she would be beautiful and fascinating; and I should never go unless I were in the mood. And it is only in that way that we succeed in deceiving one another, and fancying that we are in love and happy. But can I wish for copper saucepans and untidy hair, or like to be seen myself when I am unwashed or out of humour? Zinaida Fyodorovna in the simplicity of her heart wants me to love what I have been shunning all my life. She wants my flat to smell of cooking and washing up; she wants all the fuss of moving into another flat, of driving about with her own horses; she wants to count over my linen and to look after my health; she wants to meddle in my personal life at every instant, and to watch over every step; and at the same time she assures me genuinely that my habits and my freedom will be untouched. She is persuaded that, like a young couple, we shall very soon go for a honeymoon — that is, she wants to be with me all the time in trains and hotels, while I like to read on the journey and cannot endure talking in trains."

"You should give her a talking to," said Pekarsky.

"What! Do you suppose she would understand me? Why, we think so differently. In her opinion, to leave one's papa and mamma or one's husband for the sake of the man one loves is the height of civic virtue, while I look upon it as childish. To fall in love and run away with a man to her means

satisfactory; that a man may
libertine, and yet a man of l
and that, on the other hand, (
the pleasures of love and at
stupid, vicious animal! The ci
even among the lower classe:
French workman — spends ter
sous on his wine, and five or ter
devotes his brain and nerves
But Zinaida Fyodorovna assign
sous, but her whole soul. I m
ing to, but she would raise a w:
clare in all sincerity that I had
had nothing left to live for."

"Don't say anything to h
"but simply take a separate
all."

"That's easy to say. . . ."

There was a brief silence.

"But she is charming," saic
is exquisite. Such women im:
be in love for ever, and aban
tragic intensity."

"B[illegible]

ence gained from everyday life and handed down in innumerable novels and plays, uniformly confirms the fact that adultery and cohabitation of any sort between decent people never lasts longer than two or at most three years, however great the love may have been at the beginning. That she ought to know. And so all this business of moving, of saucepans, hopes of eternal love and harmony, are nothing but a desire to delude herself and me. She is charming and exquisite — who denies it? But she has turned my life upside down; what I have regarded as trivial and nonsensical till now she has forced me to raise to the level of a serious problem; I serve an idol whom I have never looked upon as God. She is charming — exquisite, but for some reason now when I am going home, I feel uneasy, as though I expected to meet with something inconvenient at home, such as workmen pulling the stove to pieces and blocking up the place with heaps of bricks. In fact, I am no longer giving up to love a *sous,* but part of my peace of mind and my nerves. And that's bad."

"And she doesn't hear this villain!" sighed Kukushkin. "My dear sir," he said theatrically, "I will relieve you from the burdensome obligation to love that adorable creature! I will wrest Zinaida Fyodorovna from you!"

"You may . . ." said Orlov carelessly.

For half a minute Kukushkin laughed a shrill little laugh, shaking all over, then he said:

"Look out; I am in earnest! Don't you play the Othello afterwards!"

and remained silent, and whe
of their acquaintance were r
his little finger — as though t
away other people's secrets.

Orlov suddenly looked at l

His friends understood, ar
leave. I remember that Gri
drunk, was wearisomely long
on his coat, which was cut l
poor families, pulled up the c
some long-winded story; the
listened to, he flung the rug th
over one shoulder, and with
face begged me to find his hat.

"*George,* my angel," he sa
I ask you, dear boy; come out

"You can go, but I can't.
a married man now."

"She is a dear, she won't
chief, come along! It's glo
snow and frost. . . . Upon
shaking up a bit; you are ou
know what the devil is the ma

Orlov after some hesitation. "Wait a minute; I'll get some money."

He went into the study, and Gruzin slouched in, too, dragging his rug after him. A minute later both came back into the hall. Gruzin, a little drunk and very pleased, was crumpling a ten-rouble note in his hands.

"We'll settle up to-morrow," he said. "And she is kind, she won't be cross. . . . She is my Lisotchka's godmother; I am fond of her, poor thing! Ah, my dear fellow!" he laughed joyfully, and pressing his forehead on Pekarsky's back. "Ah, Pekarsky, my dear soul! Advocatissimus — as dry as a biscuit, but you bet he is fond of women. . . ."

"Fat ones," said Orlov, putting on his fur coat. "But let us get off, or we shall be meeting her on the doorstep."

"'*Vieni pensando a me segretamente,*'" hummed Gruzin.

At last they drove off: Orlov did not sleep at home, and returned next day at dinner-time.

VI

Zinaida Fyodorovna had lost her gold watch, a present from her father. This loss surprised and alarmed her. She spent half a day going through the rooms, looking helplessly on all the tables and on all the windows. But the watch had disappeared completely.

Only three days afterwards Zinaida Fyodorovna,

ning in, left her purse in the hall. Luckily for
n that occasion it was not I but Polya who
l her off with her coat. When the purse was
l, it could not be found in the hall.
range," said Zinaida Fyodorovna in bewilder-
"I distinctly remember taking it out of my
to pay the cabman . . . and then I put it
ear the looking-glass. It's very odd!"
ad not stolen it, but I felt as though I had
it and had been caught in the theft. Tears
y came into my eyes. When they were seated
ner, Zinaida Fyodorovna said to Orlov in
:
here seem to be spirits in the flat. I lost my
in the hall to-day, and now, lo and behold, it
my table. But it's not quite a disinterested

standing with his back to the fire and she was sitting in an arm-chair facing him.

"I am not in a bad temper at all," she was saying in French. "But I have been putting things together, and now I see it clearly. I can give you the day and the hour when she stole my watch. And the purse? There can be no doubt about it. Oh!" she laughed as she took the coffee from me. "Now I understand why I am always losing my handkerchiefs and gloves. Whatever you say, I shall dismiss the magpie to-morrow and send Stepan for my Sofya. She is not a thief and has not got such a . . . repulsive appearance."

"You are out of humour. To-morrow you will feel differently, and will realise that you can't discharge people simply because you suspect them."

"It's not suspicion; it's certainty," said Zinaida Fyodorovna. "So long as I suspected that unhappy-faced, poor-looking valet of yours, I said nothing. It's too bad of you not to believe me, *George*."

"If we think differently about anything, it doesn't follow that I don't believe you. You may be right," said Orlov, turning round and flinging his cigarette-end into the fire, "but there is no need to be excited about it, anyway. In fact, I must say, I never expected my humble establishment would cause you so much serious worry and agitation. You've lost a gold coin: never mind — you may have a hundred of mine; but to change my habits, to pick up a new housemaid, to wait till she is used to the place — all that's a tedious, tiring business and does not suit me. Our present maid certainly is fat, and has, perhaps,

"Are you jealous?"

"Yes, I am," said Zinaida F

"Thank you."

"Yes, I am jealous," she rep
tened in her eyes. "No, it's s
which I find it difficult to find
pressed her hands on her temp
pulsively. "You men are so c
rible!"

"I see nothing horrible abo

"I've not seen it; I don't kn
you men begin with housemaid
used to it that you feel no r
know, I don't know, but I hav
George, of course you are right
to Orlov and changing to a car
tone. "I really am out of h
you must understand, I can't h
me and I am afraid of her. It
to see her."

"Surely you can rise above su
Orlov, shrugging his shoulders
walking away from the fire.
simpler: take no notice of her

answer Orlov received. Whatever it was, Polya remained. After that Zinaida Fyodorovna never applied to her for anything, and evidently tried to dispense with her services. When Polya handed her anything or even passed by her, jingling her bangle and rustling her skirts, she shuddered.

I believe that if Gruzin or Pekarsky had asked Orlov to dismiss Polya he would have done so without the slightest hesitation, without troubling about any explanations. He was easily persuaded, like all indifferent people. But in his relations with Zinaida Fyodorovna he displayed for some reason, even in trifles, an obstinacy which sometimes was almost irrational. I knew beforehand that if Zinaida Fyodorovna liked anything, it would be certain not to please Orlov. When on coming in from shopping she made haste to show him with pride some new purchase, he would glance at it and say coldly that the more unnecessary objects they had in the flat, the less airy it would be. It sometimes happened that after putting on his dress clothes to go out somewhere, and after saying good-bye to Zinaida Fyodorovna, he would suddenly change his mind and remain at home from sheer perversity. I used to think that he remained at home then simply in order to feel injured.

"Why are you staying?" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, with a show of vexation, though at the same time she was radiant with delight. "Why do you? You are not accustomed to spending your evenings at home, and I don't want you to alter your habits on my account. Do go out as usual, if you don't want me to feel guilty."

chair, and again screened his e
sun. Now he felt annoyed th
"May I come in?" Zinai
say, coming irresolutely into
reading? I felt dull by myse
for a minute . . . to have a p

I remember one evening sh
resolutely and inappropriately
at Orlov's feet, and from her
one could see that she did not
and was afraid.

"You are always reading
ingly, evidently wishing to fla
know, *George*, what is one of t
cess? You are very clever a
book have you there?"

Orlov answered. A silenc
minutes which seemed to me ver
ing in the drawing-room, from
them, and was afraid of cough

"There is something I wan
Zinaida Fyodorovna, and she
Very likely you'll laugh and say
You know I want I want horri

"Do," he said, screening his eyes. "The really happy man is he who thinks not only of what is, but of what is not."

"That was a long sentence which I did not quite understand. You mean happy people live in their imagination. Yes, that's true. I love to sit in your study in the evening and let my thoughts carry me far, far away. . . . It's pleasant sometimes to dream. Let us dream aloud, *George.*"

"I've never been at a girls' boarding-school; I never learnt the art."

"You are out of humour?" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, taking Orlov's hand. "Tell me why. When you are like that, I'm afraid. I don't know whether your head aches or whether you are angry with me. . . ."

Again there was a silence lasting several long minutes.

"Why have you changed?" she said softly. "Why are you never so tender or so gay as you used to be at Znamensky Street? I've been with you almost a month, but it seems to me as though we had not yet begun to live, and have not yet talked of anything as we ought to. You always answer me with jokes or else with a long cold lecture like a teacher. And there is something cold in your jokes. . . . Why have you given up talking to me seriously?"

"I always talk seriously."

"Well, then, let us talk. For God's sake, *George*. . . . Shall we?"

"Certainly, but about what?"

"Let us talk of our life, of our future," said

his forehead.

"With your views you can
ice. You are out of place th

"My views?" Orlov re
In conviction and temperam
official, one of Shtchedrin's
for something different, I ven

"Joking again, *George!*"

"Not in the least. The s
me, perhaps; but, anyway, it
anything else. I am used to i
of my own sort; I am in my
tolerable."

"You hate the service and

"Indeed? If I resign my
ing aloud and letting myself
another world, do you suppose
be less hateful to me than the

"You are ready to libel yo
tradict me." Zinaida Fyodor
got up. "I am sorry I began

"Why are you angry? I a
for not being an official. Eve

ovna went on, clasping her hands in despair: "to submit to authority, congratulate your superiors at the New Year, and then cards and nothing but cards: worst of all, to be working for a system which must be distasteful to you — no, *George,* no! You should not make such horrid jokes. It's dreadful. You are a man of ideas, and you ought to be working for your ideas and nothing else."

"You really take me for quite a different person from what I am," sighed Orlov.

"Say simply that you don't want to talk to me. You dislike me, that's all," said Zinaida Fyodorovna through her tears.

"Look here, my dear," said Orlov admonishingly, sitting up in his chair. "You were pleased to observe yourself that I am a clever, well-read man, and to teach one who knows does nothing but harm. I know very well all the ideas, great and small, which you mean when you call me a man of ideas. So if I prefer the service and cards to those ideas, you may be sure I have good grounds for it. That's one thing. Secondly, you have, so far as I know, never been in the service, and can only have drawn your ideas of Government service from anecdotes and indifferent novels. So it would not be amiss for us to make a compact, once for all, not to talk of things we know already or of things about which we are not competent to speak."

"Why do you speak to me like that?" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, stepping back as though in horror. "What for? *George,* for God's sake, think what you are saying!"

her head on his knees. " I
hausted. I can't bear it, I
my childhood my hateful, dep
my husband, now you . . . y
mad love with coldness and
horrible, insolent servant,"
" Yes, yes, I see: I am not yo
but a woman you don't resp
come your mistress. . . . I s

I had not expected that h
would make such an impr
flushed, moved uneasily in
of irony, his face wore a l
boyish dismay.

" My darling, you misun
tered helplessly, touching her
" Forgive me, I entreat yo
and I hate myself."

" I insult you with my w
. . . You are a true, genero
am conscious of it every min
ribly depressed for the last f

Zinaida Fyodorovna impul

"As for the servant, she shall be gone to-morrow," he said, still moving uneasily in his chair.

"No, she must stay, *George!* Do you hear? I am not afraid of her now. . . . One must rise above trifles and not imagine silly things. You are right! You are a wonderful, rare person!"

She soon left off crying. With tears glistening on her eyelashes, sitting on Orlov's knee, she told him in a low voice something touching, something like a reminiscence of childhood and youth. She stroked his face, kissed him, and carefully examined his hands with the rings on them and the charms on his watch-chain. She was carried away by what she was saying, and by being near the man she loved, and probably because her tears had cleared and refreshed her soul, there was a note of wonderful candour and sincerity in her voice. And Orlov played with her chestnut hair and kissed her hands, noiselessly pressing them to his lips.

Then they had tea in the study, and Zinaida Fyodorovna read aloud some letters. Soon after midnight they went to bed.

I had a fearful pain in my side that night, and could not get warm or go to sleep till morning. I could hear Orlov go from the bedroom into his study. After sitting there about an hour, he rang the bell. In my pain and exhaustion I forgot all the rules and conventions, and went to his study in my night attire, barefooted. Orlov, in his dressing-gown and cap, was standing in the doorway, waiting for me.

"When you are sent for you should come dressed,"

...re you ill?" said Or
I believe it was the first
that he addressed me not in
knows why. Most likely,
with my face distorted by
part poorly, and was very li
"If you are ill, why do yo
"That I may not die of
"How disgusting it all is,
going up to his table.
While hurriedly getting int
lighted fresh candles. He
with feet stretched out on a lo
I left him deeply engrosse
drop out of his hands as it h

VII

Now that I am writing the
by that dread of appearing
lous, in which I have been tr
when I want to be affection
tender, I don't know how to

was far more youth, freshness, and joyousness than in Orlov's love.

As I worked in the morning, cleaning boots or sweeping the rooms, I waited with a thrill at my heart for the moment when I should hear her voice and her footsteps. To stand watching her as she drank her coffee in the morning or ate her lunch, to hold her fur coat for her in the hall, and to put the goloshes on her little feet while she rested her hand on my shoulder; then to wait till the hall porter rang up for me, to meet her at the door, cold, and rosy, powdered with the snow, to listen to her brief exclamations about the frost or the cabman — if only you knew how much all that meant to me! I longed to be in love, to have a wife and child of my own. I wanted my future wife to have just such a face, such a voice. I dreamed of it at dinner, and in the street when I was sent on some errand, and when I lay awake at night. Orlov rejected with disgust children, cooking, copper saucepans, and feminine knick-knacks, and I gathered them all up, tenderly cherished them in my dreams, loved them, and begged them of destiny. I had visions of a wife, a nursery, a little house with garden paths. . . .

I knew that if I did love her I could never dare to hope for the miracle of her returning my love, but that reflection did not worry me. In my quiet, modest feeling akin to ordinary affection, there was no jealousy of Orlov or even envy of him, since I realised that for a wreck like me happiness was only to be found in dreams.

When Zinaida Fyodorovna sat up night after night

her *George,* looking immovably at a book of
h she never turned a page, or when she shud-
d and turned pale at Polya's crossing the room,
ffered with her, and the idea occurred to me to
e this festering wound as quickly as possible by
ng her know what was said here at supper on
rsdays; but — how was it to be done? More
more often I saw her tears. For the first weeks
laughed and sang to herself, even when Orlov
not at home, but by the second month there was
urnful stillness in our flat broken only on Thurs-
evenings.

e flattered Orlov, and to wring from him a coun-
it smile or kiss, was ready to go on her knees
m, to fawn on him like a dog. Even when her
t was heaviest, she could not resist glancing into

house for me to find excuses and explanations for everything, and to be waiting eagerly for the hall porter to ring for me.

She treated me as a flunkey, a being of a lower order. One may pat a dog, and yet not notice it; I was given orders and asked questions, but my presence was not observed. My master and mistress thought it unseemly to say more to me than is usually said to servants; if when waiting at dinner I had laughed or put in my word in the conversation, they would certainly have thought I was mad and have dismissed me. Zinaida Fyodorovna was favourably disposed to me, all the same. When she was sending me on some errand or explaining to me the working of a new lamp or anything of that sort, her face was extraordinarily kind, frank, and cordial, and her eyes looked me straight in the face. At such moments I always fancied she remembered with gratitude how I used to bring her letters to Znamensky Street. When she rang the bell, Polya, who considered me her favourite and hated me for it, used to say with a jeering smile:

"Go along, *your* mistress wants you."

Zinaida Fyodorovna considered me as a being of a lower order, and did not suspect that if any one in the house were in a humiliating position it was she. She did not know that I, a footman, was unhappy on her account, and used to ask myself twenty times a day what was in store for her and how it would all end. Things were growing visibly worse day by day. After the evening on which they had talked of his official work, Orlov, who could not endure tears,

stakably began to avoid conversation with her; lever Zinaida Fyodorovna began to argue, or to ch him, or seemed on the point of crying, he d some plausible excuse for retreating to his or going out. He more and more rarely slept me, and still more rarely dined there: on Thurs- he was the one to suggest some expedition to iends. Zinaida Fyodorovna was still dreaming ving the cooking done at home, of moving to a flat, of travelling abroad, but her dreams re- ed dreams. Dinner was sent in from the res- nt. Orlov asked her not to broach the ques- of moving until after they had come back from d, and apropos of their foreign tour, declared hey could not go till his hair had grown long, e could not go trailing from hotel to hotel erving the idea without long hair.

expectedly announced at breakfast that he was being sent to assist a senator who was on a revising commission in a certain province.

"I don't want to go, but I can't find an excuse to get off," he said with vexation. "I must go; there's nothing for it."

Such news instantly made Zinaida Fyodorovna's eyes look red. "Is it for long?" she asked.

"Five days or so."

"I am glad, really, you are going," she said after a moment's thought. "It will be a change for you. You will fall in love with some one on the way, and tell me about it afterwards."

At every opportunity she tried to make Orlov feel that she did not restrict his liberty in any way, and that he could do exactly as he liked, and this artless, transparent strategy deceived no one, and only unnecessarily reminded Orlov that he was not free.

"I am going this evening," he said, and began reading the paper.

Zinaida Fyodorovna wanted to see him off at the station, but he dissuaded her, saying that he was not going to America, and not going to be away five years, but only five days — possibly less.

The parting took place between seven and eight. He put one arm round her, and kissed her on the lips and on the forehead.

"Be a good girl, and don't be depressed while I am away," he said in a warm, affectionate tone which touched even me. "God keep you!"

She looked greedily into his face, to stamp his dear features on her memory, then she put her arms grace-

round his neck and laid her head on his breast. Forgive me our misunderstandings," she said in ch. "Husband and wife cannot help quar- ng if they love each other, and I love you madly. 't forget me. . . . Wire to me often and fully." rlov kissed her once more, and, without saying a l, went out in confusion. When he heard the of the lock as the door closed, he stood still in middle of the staircase in hesitation and glanced rds. It seemed to me that if a sound had ed him at that moment from above, he would turned back. But all was quiet. He straight- his coat and went downstairs irresolutely.

he sledges had been waiting a long while at the . Orlov got into one, I got into the other with portmanteaus. It was a hard frost and there

The sledges stopped unexpectedly. I opened my eyes and I saw that we had come to a standstill in Sergievsky Street, near a big house where Pekarsky lived. Orlov got out of the sledge and vanished into the entry. Five minutes later Pekarsky's footman came out, bareheaded, and, angry with the frost, shouted to me:

"Are you deaf? Pay the cabmen and go upstairs. You are wanted!"

At a complete loss, I went to the first storey. I had been to Pekarsky's flat before — that is, I had stood in the hall and looked into the drawing-room, and, after the damp, gloomy street, it always struck me by the brilliance of its picture-frames, its bronzes and expensive furniture. To-day in the midst of this splendour I saw Gruzin, Kukushkin, and, after a minute, Orlov.

"Look here, Stepan," he said, coming up to me. "I shall be staying here till Friday or Saturday. If any letters or telegrams come, you must bring them here every day. At home, of course you will say that I have gone, and send my greetings. Now you can go."

When I reached home Zinaida Fyodorovna was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room, eating a pear. There was only one candle burning in the candelabra.

"Did you catch the train?" asked Zinaida Fyodorovna.

"Yes, madam. His honour sends his greetings."

I went into my room and I, too, lay down. I had nothing to do, and I did not want to read. I was not surprised and I was not indignant. I only racked my brains to think why this deception was

ary. It is only boys in their teens who de-
their mistresses like that. How was it that a
who had thought and read so much could not
e anything more sensible? I must confess I
no means a poor opinion of his intelligence.
ve if he had had to deceive his minister or any
influential person he would have put a great
f skill and energy into doing so; but to deceive
an, the first idea that occurred to him was
tly good enough. If it succeeded — well and
if it did not, there would be no harm done —
d tell some other lie just as quickly and simply,
o mental effort.

midnight when the people on the floor over-
were moving their chairs and shouting hurrah
ome the New Year, Zinaida Fyodorovna rang

IX

The worst of it was that Orlov had thoughtlessly let Polya, too, into the secret of his deception, telling her to bring his shirts to Sergievsky Street. After that, she looked at Zinaida Fyodorovna with a malignant joy and hatred I could not understand, and was never tired of snorting with delight to herself in her own room and in the hall.

"She's outstayed her welcome; it's time she took herself off!" she would say with zest. "She ought to realise that herself. . . ."

She already divined by instinct that Zinaida Fyodorovna would not be with us much longer, and, not to let the chance slip, carried off everything she set her eyes on — smelling-bottles, tortoise-shell hairpins, handkerchiefs, shoes! On the day after New Year's Day, Zinaida Fyodorovna summoned me to her room and told me in a low voice that she missed her black dress. And then she walked through all the rooms, with a pale, frightened, and indignant face, talking to herself:

"It's too much! It's beyond everything. Why, it's unheard-of insolence!"

At dinner she tried to help herself to soup, but could not — her hands were trembling. Her lips were trembling, too. She looked helplessly at the soup and at the little pies, waiting for the trembling to pass off, and suddenly she could not resist looking at Polya.

"You can go, Polya," she said. "Stepan is enough by himself."

'll stay; I don't mind," answered Polya.
'here's no need for you to stay. You go away
:ther," Zinaida Fyodorovna went on, getting
great agitation. "You may look out for an-
place. You can go at once."
can't go away without the master's orders.
gaged me. It must be as he orders."
ou can take orders from me, too! I am mis-
here!" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, and she
d crimson.
ou may be the mistress, but only the master
smiss me. It was he engaged me."
ou dare not stay here another minute!" cried
la Fyodorovna, and she struck the plate with
ife. "You are a thief! Do you hear?"
aida Fyodorovna flung her dinner-napkin on

ting in her room, in the corner, looking as though she had been put in the corner as a punishment.

"No telegram has come?" she asked.

"No, madam."

"Ask the porter; perhaps there is a telegram. And don't leave the house," she called after me. "I am afraid to be left alone."

After that I had to run down almost every hour to ask the porter whether a telegram had come. I must own it was a dreadful time! To avoid seeing Polya, Zinaida Fyodorovna dined and had tea in her own room; it was here that she slept, too, on a short sofa like a half-moon, and she made her own bed. For the first days I took the telegrams; but, getting no answer, she lost her faith in me and began telegraphing herself. Looking at her, I, too, began impatiently hoping for a telegram. I hoped he would contrive some deception, would make arrangements, for instance, that a telegram should be sent to her from some station. If he were too much engrossed with cards or had been attracted by some other woman, I thought that both Gruzin and Kukushkin would remind him of us. But our expectations were vain. Five times a day I would go in to Zinaida Fyodorovna, intending to tell her the truth, but her eyes looked piteous as a fawn's, her shoulders seemed to droop, her lips were moving, and I went away again without saying a word. Pity and sympathy seemed to rob me of all manliness. Polya, as cheerful and well satisfied with herself as though nothing had happened, was tidying the master's study and the bedroom, rummaging in the cupboards,

aking the crockery jingle, and when she passed
a Fyodorovna's door, she hummed something
ughed. She was pleased that her mistress
ding from her. In the evening she would go
mewhere, and rang at two or three o'clock in
rning, and I had to open the door to her and
to remarks about my cough. Immediately
ards I would hear another ring; I would run
room next to the study, and Zinaida Fyodor-
putting her head out of the door, would ask,
was it rung?" while she looked at my hands
whether I had a telegram.

en at last on Saturday the bell rang below
e heard the familiar voice on the stairs, she
o delighted that she broke into sobs. She
to meet him, embraced him, kissed him on

It was evident that he had not slept all night; he had probably been playing cards and drinking freely. Zinaida Fyodorovna put him to bed, and we all walked about on tiptoe all that day. The dinner went off quite satisfactorily, but when they went into the study and had coffee the explanation began. Zinaida Fyodorovna began talking of something rapidly in a low voice; she spoke in French, and her words flowed like a stream. Then I heard a loud sigh from Orlov, and his voice.

"My God!" he said in French. "Have you really nothing fresher to tell me than this everlasting tale of your servant's misdeeds?"

"But, my dear, she robbed me and said insulting things to me."

"But why is it she doesn't rob me or say insulting things to me? Why is it I never notice the maids nor the porters nor the footmen? My dear, you are simply capricious and refuse to know your own mind. . . . I really begin to suspect that you must be in a certain condition. When I offered to let her go, you insisted on her remaining, and now you want me to turn her away. I can be obstinate, too, in such cases. You want her to go, but I want her to remain. That's the only way to cure you of your nerves."

"Oh, very well, very well," said Zinaida Fyodorovna in alarm. "Let us say no more about that. . . . Let us put it off till to-morrow. . . . Now tell me about Moscow. . . . What is going on in Moscow?"

X

er lunch next day — it was the seventh of Jan- St. John the Baptist's Day — Orlov put on his dress coat and his decoration to go to visit his and congratulate him on his name day. He go at two o'clock, and it was only half-past hen he had finished dressing. What was he for that half-hour? He walked about the ng-room, declaiming some congratulatory which he had recited as a child to his father other.

aida Fyodorovna, who was just going out to a naker's or to the shops, was sitting, listening with a smile. I don't know how their con- ion began, but when I took Orlov his gloves,

of the upper classes and the evils of the marriage system. Do understand me, at last. The upper class is always abused in contrast with the world of tradesmen, priests, workmen and peasants, Sidors and Nikitas of all sorts. I detest both classes, but if I had honesty to choose between the two, I should without hesitation, prefer the upper class, and there would be no falsity or affectation about it, since all my tastes are in that direction. Our world is trivial and empty, but at any rate we speak French decently, read something, and don't punch each other in the ribs even in our most violent quarrels, while the Sidors and the Nikitas and their worships in trade talk about 'being quite agreeable,' 'in a jiffy,' 'blast your eyes,' and display the utmost license of pot-house manners and the most degrading superstition."

"The peasant and the tradesman feed you."

"Yes, but what of it? That's not only to my discredit, but to theirs too. They feed me and take off their caps to me, so it seems they have not the intelligence and honesty to do otherwise. I don't blame or praise any one: I only mean that the upper class and the lower are as bad as one another. My feelings and my intelligence are opposed to both, but my tastes lie more in the direction of the former. Well, now for the evils of marriage," Orlov went on, glancing at his watch. "It's high time for you to understand that there are no evils in the system itself; what is the matter is that you don't know yourselves what you want from marriage. What is it you want? In legal and illegal cohabitation, in

sort of union and cohabitation, good or bad, nderlying reality is the same. You ladies live at underlying reality alone: for you it's every- your existence would have no meaning for you ut it. You want nothing but that, and you get t since you've taken to reading novels you are ed of it: you rush from pillar to post, you ssly change your men, and to justify this tur- ou have begun talking of the evils of marriage. g as you can't and won't renounce what under- all, your chief foe, your devil — so long as rve that slavishly, what use is there in discuss- e matter seriously? Everything you may say will be falsity and affectation. I shall not e you."

ent to find out from the hall porter whether the

You are afraid of freedom, and you mock the promptings of genuine feeling, from fear that some ignoramus may suspect you of being sincere. You are afraid to show me to your friends; there's no greater infliction for you than to go about with me in the street. . . . Isn't that true? Why haven't you introduced me to your father or your cousin all this time? Why is it? No, I am sick of it at last," cried Zinaida Fyodorovna, stamping. "I demand what is mine by right. You must present me to your father."

"If you want to know him, go and present yourself. He receives visitors every morning from ten till half-past."

"How base you are!" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, wringing her hands in despair. "Even if you are not sincere, and are not saying what you think, I might hate you for your cruelty. Oh, how base you are!"

"We keep going round and round and never reach the real point. The real point is that you made a mistake, and you won't acknowledge it aloud. You imagined that I was a hero, and that I had some extraordinary ideas and ideals, and it has turned out that I am a most ordinary official, a card-player, and have no partiality for ideas of any sort. I am a worthy representative of the rotten world from which you have run away because you were revolted with its triviality and emptiness. Recognise it and be just: don't be indignant with me, but with yourself, as it is your mistake, and not mine."

"Yes, I admit I was mistaken."

"Well, that's all right, then. We've reached that

t at last, thank God. Now hear something
, if you please: I can't rise to your level — I am
lepraved; you can't descend to my level, either,
ou are too exalted. So there is only one thing
o do. . . ."

What?" Zinaida Fyodorovna asked quickly,
ng her breath and turning suddenly as white as
et of paper.

To call logic to our aid. . . ."

Georgy, why are you torturing me?" Zinaida
lorovna said suddenly in Russian in a breaking
. "What is it for? Think of my mis-
. . ."

lov, afraid of tears, went quickly into his study,
I don't know why — whether it was that he
d to cause her extra pain, or whether he re-

mother, no relations, and here she was living between a man who hated her and Polya, who robbed her — and how desolate her life seemed to me! I do not know why, but I went into the drawing-room to her. Weak and helpless, looking with her lovely hair like an embodiment of tenderness and grace, she was in anguish, as though she were ill; she was lying on a couch, hiding her face, and quivering all over.

"Madam, shouldn't I fetch a doctor?" I asked gently.

"No, there's no need . . . it's nothing," she said, and she looked at me with her tear-stained eyes. "I have a little headache. . . . Thank you."

I went out, and in the evening she was writing letter after letter, and sent me out first to Pekarsky, then to Gruzin, then to Kukushkin, and finally anywhere I chose, if only I could find Orlov and give him the letter. Every time I came back with the letter she scolded me, entreated me, thrust money into my hand — as though she were in a fever. And all the night she did not sleep, but sat in the drawing-room, talking to herself.

Orlov returned to dinner next day, and they were reconciled.

The first Thursday afterwards Orlov complained to his friends of the intolerable life he led; he smoked a great deal, and said with irritation:

"It is no life at all; it's the rack. Tears, wailing, intellectual conversations, begging for forgiveness, again tears and wailing; and the long and the short of it is that I have no flat of my own now. I am wretched, and I make her wretched. Surely I

't to live another month or two like this? can I? But yet I may have to."

Why don't you speak, then?" said Pekarsky.

ve tried, but I can't. One can boldly tell the whatever it may be, to an independent, rational but in this case one has to do with a creature as no will, no strength of character, and no I cannot endure tears; they disarm me. she cries, I am ready to swear eternal love and yself."

arsky did not understand; he scratched his forehead in perplexity and said:

ou really had better take another flat for her. simple!"

e wants me, not the flat. But what's the good king?" sighed Orlov. "I only hear endless

that he was again ordered to attend the senator, and the same evening he went off with his portmanteaus to Pekarsky.

XI

An old man of sixty, in a long fur coat reaching to the ground, and a beaver cap, was standing at the door.

"Is Georgy Ivanitch at home?" he asked.

At first I thought it was one of the moneylenders, Gruzin's creditors, who sometimes used to come to Orlov for small payments on account; but when he came into the hall and flung open his coat, I saw the thick brows and the characteristically compressed lips which I knew so well from the photographs, and two rows of stars on the uniform. I recognised him: it was Orlov's father, the distinguished statesman.

I answered that Georgy Ivanitch was not at home. The old man pursed up his lips tightly and looked into space, reflecting, showing me his dried-up, toothless profile.

"I'll leave a note," he said; "show me in."

He left his goloshes in the hall, and, without taking off his long, heavy fur coat, went into the study. There he sat down before the table, and, before taking up the pen, for three minutes he pondered, shading his eyes with his hand as though from the sun — exactly as his son did when he was out of humour. His face was sad, thoughtful, with that look of resignation which I have only seen on the faces of the old and religious. I stood behind him,

l at his bald head and at the hollow at the nape
s neck, and it was clear as daylight to me that
veak old man was now in my power. There
ıot a soul in the flat except my enemy and me.
l only to use a little physical violence, then
ı his watch to disguise the object of the crime,
o get off by the back way, and I should have
d infinitely more than I could have imagined
ble when I took up the part of a footman. I
ht that I could hardly get a better opportunity.
nstead of acting, I looked quite unconcernedly,
t his bald patch and then at his fur, and calmly
ated on this man's relation to his only son, and
e fact that people spoiled by power and wealth
bly don't want to die. . . .

Have you been long in my son's service?" he

a change; I had become different. To convince myself, I began to recall the past, but at once I felt uneasy, as though I had accidentally peeped into a dark, damp corner. I remembered my comrades and friends, and my first thought was how I should blush in confusion if ever I met any of them. What was I now? What had I to think of and to do? Where was I to go? What was I living for?

I could make nothing of it. I only knew one thing — that I must make haste to pack my things and be off. Before the old man's visit my position as a flunkey had a meaning; now it was absurd. Tears dropped into my open portmanteau; I felt insufferably sad; but how I longed to live! I was ready to embrace and include in my short life every possibility open to man. I wanted to speak, to read, and to hammer in some big factory, and to stand on watch, and to plough. I yearned for the Nevsky Prospect, for the sea and the fields — for every place to which my imagination travelled. When Zinaida Fyodorovna came in, I rushed to open the door for her, and with peculiar tenderness took off her fur coat. The last time!

We had two other visitors that day besides the old man. In the evening when it was quite dark, Gruzin came to fetch some papers for Orlov. He opened the table-drawer, took the necessary papers, and, rolling them up, told me to put them in the hall beside his cap while he went in to see Zinaida Fyodorovna. She was lying on the sofa in the drawing-room, with her arms behind her head. Five or six days had already passed since Orlov went on his tour

pection, and no one knew when he would be but this time she did not send telegrams and t expect them. She did not seem to notice the ce of Polya, who was still living with us. e it, then," was what I read on her passionless ry pale face. Like Orlov, she wanted to be py out of obstinacy. To spite herself and hing in the world, she lay for days together on fa, desiring and expecting nothing but evil for f. Probably she was picturing to herself s return and the inevitable quarrels with him; is growing indifference to her, his infidelities; ow they would separate; and perhaps these ing thoughts gave her satisfaction. But what she have said if she found out the actual

We had nothing in the flat. I went to the restaurant and brought him the ordinary rouble dinner.

"To your health, my dear," he said to Zinaida Fyodorovna, and he tossed off a glass of vodka. "My little girl, your godchild, sends you her love. Poor child! she's rickety. Ah, children, children!" he sighed. "Whatever you may say, Godmother, it is nice to be a father. Dear *George* can't understand that feeling."

He drank some more. Pale and lean, with his dinner-napkin over his chest like a little pinafore, he ate greedily, and raising his eyebrows, kept looking guiltily, like a little boy, first at Zinaida Fyodorovna and then at me. It seemed as though he would have begun crying if I had not given him the grouse or the jelly. When he had satisfied his hunger he grew more lively, and began laughingly telling some story about the Birshov household, but perceiving that it was tiresome and that Zinaida Fyodorovna was not laughing, he ceased. And there was a sudden feeling of dreariness. After he had finished his dinner they sat in the drawing-room by the light of a single lamp, and did not speak; it was painful to him to lie to her, and she wanted to ask him something, but could not make up her mind to. So passed half an hour. Gruzin glanced at his watch.

"I suppose it's time for me to go."

"No, stay a little. . . . We must have a talk."

Again they were silent. He sat down to the piano, struck one chord, then began playing, and sang softly, "What does the coming day bring me?" but as usual he got up suddenly and tossed his head.

"Play something," Zinaida Fyodorovna asked him.

"What shall I play?" he asked, shrugging his shoulders. "I have forgotten everything. I've given it up long ago."

Looking at the ceiling as though trying to remember, he played two pieces of Tchaikovsky with exquisite expression, with such warmth, such insight! His face was just as usual — neither stupid nor intelligent — and it seemed to me a perfect marvel that a man whom I was accustomed to see in the midst of the most degrading, impure surroundings, was capable of such purity, of rising to a feeling so lofty, so far beyond my reach. Zinaida Fyodorovna's face glowed, and she walked about the drawing-room in emotion.

"Wait a bit, Godmother; if I can remember it, I will play you something," he said; "I heard it played on the violoncello."

Beginning timidly and picking out the notes, and then gathering confidence, he played Saint-Saëns's "Swan Song." He played it through, and then played it a second time.

"It's nice, isn't it?" he said.

Moved by the music, Zinaida Fyodorovna stood beside him and asked:

"Tell me honestly, as a friend, what do you think about me?"

"What am I to say?" he said, raising his eyebrows. "I love you and think nothing but good of you. But if you wish that I should speak generally about the question that interests you," he went on,

rubbing his sleeve near the elbow and frowning, "then, my dear, you know. . . . To follow freely the promptings of the heart does not always give good people happiness. To feel free and at the same time to be happy, it seems to me, one must not conceal from oneself that life is coarse, cruel, and merciless in its conservatism, and one must retaliate with what it deserves — that is, be as coarse and as merciless in one's striving for freedom. That's what I think."

"That's beyond me," said Zinaida Fyodorovna, with a mournful smile. "I am exhausted already. I am so exhausted that I wouldn't stir a finger for my own salvation."

"Go into a nunnery."

He said this in jest, but after he had said it, tears glistened in Zinaida Fyodorovna's eyes and then in his.

"Well," he said, "we've been sitting and sitting, and now we must go. Good-bye, dear Godmother. God give you health."

He kissed both her hands, and stroking them tenderly, said that he should certainly come to see her again in a day or two. In the hall, as he was putting on his overcoat, that was so like a child's pelisse, he fumbled long in his pockets to find a tip for me, but found nothing there.

"Good-bye, my dear fellow," he said sadly, and went away.

I shall never forget the feeling that this man left behind him.

Zinaida Fyodorovna still walked about the room

kushkin.

" Is Georgy Ivanitch at ho
he come back? You say n
that case, I'll go in and kis
and so away. Zinaida Fyo
in? " he cried. " I want to k
my being so late."

He was not long in the d
than ten minutes, but I felt a
ing a long while and would
my lips from indignation and
hated Zinaida Fyodorovna.
turn him out? " I thought ind
evident that she was bored by

When I held his fur coat f
a mark of special good-will,
on without a wife.

" But I don't suppose you
said, laughingly. " I've no d
as thick as thieves. . . . You

In spite of my experience of
of mankind at that time, and
often exaggerated what was o

kitchens and servants' quarters of his coming to see us in the evenings when Orlov was away, and staying with Zinaida Fyodorovna till late at night? And when my tittle-tattle came to the ears of his acquaintance, he would drop his eyes in confusion and shake his little finger. And would not he, I thought, looking at his little honeyed face, this very evening at cards pretend and perhaps declare that he had already won Zinaida Fyodorovna from Orlov?

That hatred which failed me at midday when the old father had come, took possession of me now. Kukushkin went away at last, and as I listened to the shuffle of his leather goloshes, I felt greatly tempted to fling after him, as a parting shot, some coarse word of abuse, but I restrained myself. And when the steps had died away on the stairs, I went back to the hall, and, hardly conscious of what I was doing, took up the roll of papers that Gruzin had left behind, and ran headlong downstairs. Without cap or overcoat, I ran down into the street. It was not cold, but big flakes of snow were falling and it was windy.

"Your Excellency!" I cried, catching up Kukushkin. "Your Excellency!"

He stopped under a lamp-post and looked round with surprise.

"Your Excellency!" I said breathless, "your Excellency!"

And not able to think of anything to say, I hit him two or three times on the face with the roll of paper. Completely at a loss, and hardly wondering — I had so completely taken him by surprise —

With my head wet from
for breath, I ran to my roon
off my swallow-tails, put on
overcoat, and carried my p
passage; I must get away!
riedly sat down and began w

"I leave you my false p
beg you to keep it as a mem
Petersburg official!

"To steal into another m
name, to watch under the m
son's intimate life, to hear
thing in order later on, unas
lying — all this, you will say
Yes, but I care nothing for fi
endured dozens of your dir
you said and did what you l
to look on, and be silent. I
a present of my silence. B
living soul at hand who da
without flattery, let your fi

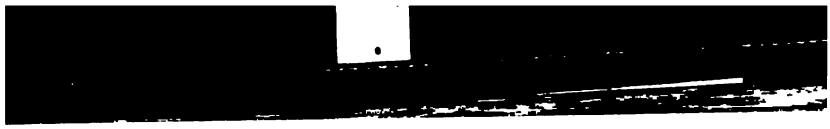
The big windows with their dark curtains, the bed, the crumpled dress coat on the floor, and my wet footprints, looked gloomy and forbidding. And there was a peculiar stillness.

Possibly because I had run out into the street without my cap and goloshes I was in a high fever. My face burned, my legs ached. . . . My heavy head drooped over the table, and there was that kind of division in my thought when every idea in the brain seemed dogged by its shadow.

"I am ill, weak, morally cast down," I went on; "I cannot write to you as I should like to. For the first moment I desired to insult and humiliate you, but now I do not feel that I have the right to do so. You and I have both fallen, and neither of us will ever rise up again; and even if my letter were eloquent, terrible, and passionate, it would still seem like beating on the lid of a coffin: however one knocks upon it, one will not wake up the dead! No efforts could warm your accursed cold blood, and you know that better than I do. Why write? But my mind and heart are burning, and I go on writing; for some reason I am moved as though this letter still might save you and me. I am so feverish that my thoughts are disconnected, and my pen scratches the paper without meaning; but the question I want to put to you stands before me as clear as though in letters of flame.

"Why I am prematurely weak and fallen is not hard to explain. Like Samson of old, I have taken the gates of Gaza on my shoulders to carry them to the top of the mountain, and only when I was ex-

I have endured cold, hung
erty. Of personal happ
known nothing. I have n
bitter, and my conscience i
But why have you fallen –
bolical causes hindered y
into full flower? Why,
life, were you in such haste
likeness of God, and to l
who backs and scares other
self? You are afraid of
an Oriental who sits all d
his hookah. Yes, you read
pean coat fits you well, b
purely Oriental, pasha-like
from hunger, cold, physic
uneasiness! How early y
dressing-gown! What a
played towards real life and
healthy and normal man str
snug, how warm, how comf
you are! Yes, it is deathl
one ray of light, as in solit



intolerable. That it may not disturb your peace, like thousands of your contemporaries, you made haste in youth to put it under bar and bolt. Your ironical attitude to life, or whatever you like to call it, is your armour; and your thought, fettered and frightened, dare not leap over the fence you have put round it; and when you jeer at ideas which you pretend to know all about, you are like the deserter fleeing from the field of battle, and, to stifle his shame, sneering at war and at valour. Cynicism stifles pain. In some novel of Dostoevsky's an old man tramples underfoot the portrait of his dearly loved daughter because he had been unjust to her, and you vent your foul and vulgar jeers upon the ideas of goodness and truth because you have not the strength to follow them. You are frightened of every honest and truthful hint at your degradation, and you purposely surround yourself with people who do nothing but flatter your weaknesses. And you may well, you may well dread the sight of tears!

"By the way, your attitude to women. Shamelessness has been handed down to us in our flesh and blood, and we are trained to shamelessness; but that is what we are men for — to subdue the beast in us. When you reached manhood and *all* ideas became known to you, you could not have failed to see the truth; you knew it, but you did not follow it; you were afraid of it, and to deceive your conscience you began loudly assuring yourself that it was not you but woman that was to blame, that she was as degraded as your attitude to her. Your cold, scabrous anecdotes, your coarse laughter, all your innumer-

theories concerning the underlying reality of
iage and the indefinite demands made upon it,
rning the ten *sous* the French workman pays
oman; your everlasting attacks on female logic,
, weakness and so on — doesn't it all look like
sire at all costs to force woman down into the
that she may be on the same level as your atti-
to her? You are a weak, unhappy, unpleasant
n!"

naida Fyodorovna began playing the piano in
rawing-room, trying to recall the song of Saint-
s that Gruzin had played. I went and lay on
ed, but remembering that it was time for me to
got up with an effort and with a heavy, burning
went to the table again.

What if by a miracle the present turned out to be a dream, a horrible nightmare, and we should wake up renewed, pure, strong, proud of our righteousness? Sweet visions fire me, and I am almost breathless with emotion. I have a terrible longing to live. I long for our life to be holy, lofty, and majestic as the heavens above. Let us live! The sun doesn't rise twice a day, and life is not given us again — clutch at what is left of your life and save it. . . ."

I did not write another word. I had a multitude of thoughts in my mind, but I could not connect them and get them on to paper. Without finishing the letter, I signed it with my name and rank, and went into the study. It was dark. I felt for the table and put the letter on it. I must have stumbled against the furniture in the dark and made a noise.

"Who is there?" I heard an alarmed voice in the drawing-room.

And the clock on the table softly struck one at the moment.

XIII

For at least half a minute I fumbled at the door in the dark, feeling for the handle; then I slowly opened it and walked into the drawing-room. Zinaida Fyodorovna was lying on the couch, and raising herself on her elbow, she looked towards me. Unable to bring myself to speak, I walked slowly by, and she followed me with her eyes. I stood for a little time in the dining-room and then walked by her again, and she looked at me intently and with

perplexity, even with alarm. At last I stood still and said with an effort:

"He is not coming back."

She quickly got on to her feet, and looked at me without understanding.

"He is not coming back," I repeated, and my heart beat violently. "He will not come back, for he has not left Petersburg. He is staying at Pekarsky's."

She understood and believed me — I saw that from her sudden pallor, and from the way she laid her arms upon her bosom in terror and entreaty. In one instant all that had happened of late flashed through her mind; she reflected, and with pitiless clarity she saw the whole truth. But at the same time she remembered that I was a flunkey, a being of a lower order. . . . A casual stranger, with hair ruffled, with face flushed with fever, perhaps drunk, in a common overcoat, was coarsely intruding into her intimate life, and that offended her. She said to me sternly:

"It's not your business: go away."

"Oh, believe me!" I cried impetuously, holding out my hands to her. "I am not a footman; I am as free as you."

I mentioned my name, and, speaking very rapidly that she might not interrupt me or go away, explained to her who I was and why I was living there. This new discovery struck her more than the first. Till then she had hoped that her footman had lied or made a mistake or been silly, but now after my confession she had no doubts left. From the expres-

sion of her unhappy eyes and face, which suddenly lost its softness and beauty and looked old, I saw that she was insufferably miserable, and that the conversation would lead to no good; but I went on impetuously:

"The senator and the tour of inspection were invented to deceive you. In January, just as now, he did not go away, but stayed at Pekarsky's, and I saw him every day and took part in the deception. He was weary of you, he hated your presence here, he mocked at you. . . . If you could have heard how he and his friends here jeered at you and your love, you would not have remained here one minute! Go away from here! Go away."

"Well," she said in a shaking voice, and moved her hand over her hair. "Well, so be it."

Her eyes were full of tears, her lips were quivering, and her whole face was strikingly pale and distorted with anger. Orlov's coarse, petty lying revolted her and seemed to her contemptible, ridiculous: she smiled and I did not like that smile.

"Well," she repeated, passing her hand over her hair again, "so be it. He imagines that I shall die of humiliation, and instead of that I am . . . amused by it. There's no need for him to hide." She walked away from the piano and said, shrugging her shoulders: "There's no need. . . . It would have been simpler to have it out with me instead of keeping in hiding in other people's flats. I have eyes; I saw it myself long ago. . . . I was only waiting for him to come back to have things out once for all."

Then she sat down on a low chair by the table, and, leaning her head on the arm of the sofa, wept bitterly. In the drawing-room there was only one candle burning in the candelabra, and the chair where she was sitting was in darkness; but I saw how her head and shoulders were quivering, and how her hair, escaping from her combs, covered her neck, her face, her arms. . . . Her quiet, steady weeping, which was not hysterical but a woman's ordinary weeping, expressed a sense of insult, of wounded pride, of injury, and of something helpless, hopeless, which one could not set right and to which one could not get used. Her tears stirred an echo in my troubled and suffering heart; I forgot my illness and everything else in the world; I walked about the drawing-room and muttered distractedly:

"Is this life? . . . Oh, one can't go on living like this, one can't. . . . Oh, it's madness, wickedness, not life."

"What humiliation!" she said through her tears. "To live together, to smile at me at the very time when I was burdensome to him, ridiculous in his eyes! Oh, how humiliating!"

She lifted up her head, and looking at me with tear-stained eyes through her hair, wet with her tears, and pushing it back as it prevented her seeing me, she asked:

"They laughed at me?"

"To these men you were laughable — you and your love and Turgenev; they said your head was full of him. And if we both die at once in despair, that will amuse them, too; they will make a funny

anecdote of it and tell it at your requiem service. But why talk of them?" I said impatiently. "We must get away from here — I cannot stay here one minute longer."

She began crying again, while I walked to the piano and sat down.

"What are we waiting for?" I asked dejectedly. "It's two o'clock."

"I am not waiting for anything," she said. "I am utterly lost."

"Why do you talk like that? We had better consider together what we are to do. Neither you nor I can stay here. Where do you intend to go?"

Suddenly there was a ring at the bell. My heart stood still. Could it be Orlov, to whom perhaps Kukushkin had complained of me? How should we meet? I went to open the door. It was Polya. She came in shaking the snow off her pelisse, and went into her room without saying a word to me. When I went back to the drawing-room, Zinaida Fyodorovna, pale as death, was standing in the middle of the room, looking towards me with big eyes.

"Who was it?" she asked softly.

"Polya," I answered.

She passed her hand over her hair and closed her eyes wearily.

"I will go away at once," she said. "Will you be kind and take me to the Petersburg Side? What time is it now?"

"A quarter to three."

house, it was dark and deser
snow was falling and a dam
face. I remember it was th
a thaw had set in, and fc
cabmen had been driving c
impression of the back stairs,
night darkness, and the port
had questioned us before let
Zinaida Fyodorovna was utt
pirited. When we got into
was put up, trembling all ov
saying how grateful she was

"I do not doubt your good
that you should be troubled,'
I understand, I understand. .
here to-day, I felt that he w
something. Well, so be it.
anyway, that you should be t

She still had her doubts.
I asked the cabman to dri
Street; stopping him at Pek
of the cab and rang. When
door, I asked aloud, that
might hear whether Georgy

"Has Georgy Ivanitch been staying here long?" she asked.

"Going on for three weeks."

"And he's not been away?"

"No," answered the porter, looking at me with surprise.

"Tell him, early to-morrow," I said, "that his sister has arrived from Warsaw. Good-bye."

Then we drove on. The cab had no apron, the snow fell on us in big flakes, and the wind, especially on the Neva, pierced us through and through. I began to feel as though we had been driving for a long time, that for ages we had been suffering, and that for ages I had been listening to Zinaida Fyodorovna's shuddering breath. In semi-delirium, as though half asleep, I looked back upon my strange, incoherent life, and for some reason recalled a melodrama, "The Parisian Beggars," which I had seen once or twice in my childhood. And when to shake off that semi-delirium I peeped out from the hood and saw the dawn, all the images of the past, all my misty thoughts, for some reason, blended in me into one distinct, overpowering thought: everything was irrevocably over for Zinaida Fyodorovna and for me. This was as certain a conviction as though the cold blue sky contained a prophecy, but a minute later I was already thinking of something else and believed differently.

"What am I now?" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, in a voice husky with the cold and the damp. "Where am I to go? What am I to do? Gruzin told me to go into a nunnery. Oh, I would! I

we will go abroad t
said.

"That's impossible. My
a passport."

"I will take you without

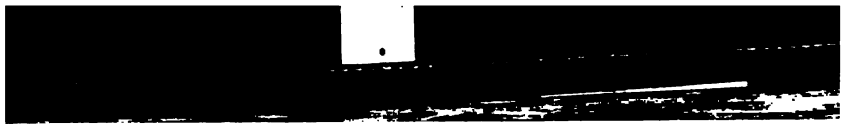
The cabman stopped at a
storeys, painted a dark col
from me her small light bas
we had brought with us — Zi
a wry smile and said:

"These are my *bijoux*."

But she was so weak that s
bijoux.

It was a long while before
After the third or fourth r
the windows, and there was a
ing and whispering; at last th
and a stout peasant woman
face appeared at the door.
her stood a thin little old w
hair, carrying a candle in her
rovna ran into the passage an
the old woman's neck.

"Nina, I've been



door was closed, but still I heard her sobs and the cry "Nina!"

I got into the cab and told the man to drive slowly to the Nevsky Prospect. I had to think of a night's lodging for myself.

Next day towards evening I went to see Zinaida Fyodorovna. She was terribly changed. There were no traces of tears on her pale, terribly sunken face, and her expression was different. I don't know whether it was that I saw her now in different surroundings, far from luxurious, and that our relations were by now different, or perhaps that intense grief had already set its mark upon her; she did not strike me as so elegant and well dressed as before. Her figure seemed smaller; there was an abruptness and excessive nervousness about her as though she were in a hurry, and there was not the same softness even in her smile. I was dressed in an expensive suit which I had bought during the day. She looked first of all at that suit and at the hat in my hand, then turned an impatient, searching glance upon my face as though studying it.

"Your transformation still seems to me a sort of miracle," she said. "Forgive me for looking at you with such curiosity. You are an extraordinary man, you know."

I told her again who I was, and why I was living at Orlov's, and I told her at greater length and in more detail than the day before. She listened with great attention, and said without letting me finish:

"Everything there is over for me. You know,

you happiness, and beg you
get.

" P. S.— I am sending o

The trunks and baskets d
standing in the passage, and
teau was there beside them,

" So . . ." Zinaida Fyo
did not finish.

We were silent. She to
for a couple of minutes bef
that time her face wore
temptuous, proud, and hars
before at the beginning of
came into her eyes — not
proud, angry tears.

" Listen," she said, gettir
ing away to the window that
" I have made up my mind t
morrow."

" I am very glad. I am
" Accept me as a recruit

and threatens the town: 'Now we shall settle our account,' and after this he begins a new life. So when I look out of the train window at Petersburg for the last time, I shall say, 'Now we shall settle our account!'"

Saying this, she smiled at her jest, and for some reason shuddered all over.

XV

At Venice I had an attack of pleurisy. Probably I had caught cold in the evening when we were rowing from the station to the Hotel Bauer. I had to take to my bed and stay there for a fortnight. Every morning while I was ill Zinaida Fyodorovna came from her room to drink coffee with me, and afterwards read aloud to me French and Russian books, of which we had bought a number at Vienna. These books were either long, long familiar to me or else had no interest for me, but I had the sound of a sweet, kind voice beside me, so that the meaning of all of them was summed up for me in the one thing — I was not alone. She would go out for a walk, come back in her light grey dress, her light straw hat, gay, warmed by the spring sun; and sitting by my bed, bending low down over me, would tell me something about Venice or read me those books — and I was happy.

At night I was cold, ill, and dreary, but by day I revelled in life — I can find no better expression for it. The brilliant warm sunshine beating in at the open windows and at the door upon the bal-

the shouts below, the splash of oars, the tinkle
lls, the prolonged boom of the cannon at mid-
and the feeling of perfect, perfect freedom,
onders with me; I felt as though I were grow-
rong, broad wings which were bearing me God
s whither. And what charm, what joy at times
thought that another life was so close to mine!
was the servant, the guardian, the friend, the
ensable fellow-traveller of a creature, young,
iful, wealthy, but weak, lonely, and insulted!
leasant even to be ill when you know that there
eople who are looking forward to your convales-
as to a holiday. One day I heard her whisper-
ehind the door with my doctor, and then she
in to me with tear-stained eyes. It was a bad
but I was touched, and there was a wonderful
ess in my heart.

that lovely sea, which was so akin to me and to which I had given up my youth. I longed to live — to live — and nothing more.

A fortnight later I began walking freely. I loved to sit in the sun, and to listen to the gondoliers without understanding them, and for hours together to gaze at the little house where, they said, Desdemona lived — a naïve, mournful little house with a demure expression, as light as lace, so light that it looked as though one could lift it from its place with one hand. I stood for a long time by the tomb of Canova, and could not take my eyes off the melancholy lion. And in the Palace of the Doges I was always drawn to the corner where the portrait of the unhappy Marino Faliero was painted over with black. "It is fine to be an artist, a poet, a dramatist," I thought, "but since that is not vouchsafed to me, if only I could go in for mysticism! If only I had a grain of some faith to add to the unruffled peace and serenity that fills the soul!"

In the evening we ate oysters, drank wine, and went out in a gondola. I remember our black gondola swayed softly in the same place while the water faintly gurgled under it. Here and there the reflection of the stars and the lights on the bank quivered and trembled. Not far from us in a gondola, hung with coloured lanterns which were reflected in the water, there were people singing. The sounds of guitars, of violins, of mandolins, of men's and women's voices, were audible in the dark. Zinaida Fyodorovna, pale, with a grave, almost stern face, was sitting beside me, compressing her lips and

ng her hands. She was thinking about some-
she did not stir an eyelash, nor hear me. Her
er attitude, and her fixed, expressionless gaze,
r incredibly miserable, dreadful, and icy-cold
ies, and around her the gondolas, the lights,
sic, the song with its vigorous passionate cry
m-mo! Jam-mo!"— what contrasts in life!
she sat like that, with tightly clasped hands,
mournful, I used to feel as though we were
haracters in some novel in the old-fashioned
alled "The Ill-fated," "The Abandoned,"
ething of the sort. Both of us: she — the
d, the abandoned; and I — the faithful, de-
friend, the dreamer, and, if you like it, a super-
man, a failure capable of nothing but coughing
eaming, and perhaps sacrificing myself. . . .
o and what needed my sacrifices now? And
ad I to sacrifice, indeed?

"Can it have been so difficult to see through him? A fine sphinx! A sphinx indeed — a *kammer-junker!* I reproach you for nothing, God forbid," I went on, feeling I was coarse, that I had not the tact, the delicacy which are so essential when you have to do with a fellow-creature's soul; in early days before I knew her I had not noticed this defect in myself. "But how could you fail to see what he was," I went on, speaking more softly and more diffidently, however.

"You mean to say you despise my past, and you are right," she said, deeply stirred. "You belong to a special class of men who cannot be judged by ordinary standards; your moral requirements are exceptionally rigorous, and I understand you can't forgive things. I understand you, and if sometimes I say the opposite, it doesn't mean that I look at things differently from you; I speak the same old nonsense simply because I haven't had time yet to wear out my old clothes and prejudices. I, too, hate and despise my past, and Orlov and my love. . . . What was that love? It's positively absurd now," she said, going to the window and looking down at the canal. "All this love only clouds the conscience and confuses the mind. The meaning of life is to be found only in one thing — fighting. To get one's heel on the vile head of the serpent and to crush it! That's the meaning of life. In that alone or in nothing."

I told her long stories of my past, and described my really astounding adventures. But of the change that had taken place in me I did not say one word. She always listened to me with great attention, and at

esting places she rubbed her hands as though
l that it had not yet been her lot to experience
adventures, such joys and terrors. Then she
l suddenly fall to musing and retreat into her-
and I could see from her face that she was not
ding to me.

losed the windows that looked out on the canal
asked whether we should not have the fire
ed.

No, never mind. I am not cold," she said, smil-
stlessly. " I only feel weak. Do you know, I
I have grown much wiser lately. I have
ordinary, original ideas now. When I think of
ast, of my life then . . . people in general, in
it is all summed up for me in the image of my
nother. Coarse, insolent, soulless, false, de-
ed, and a morphia maniac too. My father,

"What do you think? Is Polya still living there?"

"Probably."

And I went off to my room. So we spent a whole month. One grey morning when we both stood at my window, looking at the clouds which were moving up from the sea, and at the darkening canal, expecting every minute that it would pour with rain, and when a thick, narrow streak of rain covered the sea as though with a muslin veil, we both felt suddenly dreary. The same day we both set off for Florence.

XVI

It was autumn, at Nice. One morning when I went into her room she was sitting on a low chair, bent together and huddled up, with her legs crossed and her face hidden in her hands. She was weeping bitterly, with sobs, and her long, unbrushed hair fell on her knees. The impression of the exquisite marvellous sea which I had only just seen and of which I wanted to tell her, left me all at once, and my heart ached.

"What is it?" I asked; she took one hand from her face and motioned me to go away. "What is it?" I repeated, and for the first time during our acquaintance I kissed her hand.

"No, it's nothing, nothing," she said quickly. "Oh, it's nothing, nothing. . . . Go away. . . . You see, I am not dressed."

I went out overwhelmed. The calm and serene mood in which I had been for so long was poisoned

mpassion. I had a passionate longing to fall
feet, to entreat her not to weep in solitude, but
re her grief with me, and the monotonous mur-
f the sea already sounded a gloomy prophecy
ears, and I foresaw fresh tears, fresh troubles,
esh losses in the future. "What is she crying
? What is it?" I wondered, recalling her
nd her agonised look. I remembered she was
hild. She tried to conceal her condition from
people, and also from herself. At home she
about in a loose wrapper or in a blouse with ex-
ly full folds over the bosom, and when she
out anywhere she laced herself in so tightly
n two occasions she fainted when we were out.
ever spoke to me of her condition, and when I

us. I was no more to her than that cobweb to that palm-tree, which hangs on it by chance and which will be torn off and carried away by the wind. I walked about the square where the band was playing, went into the Casino; there I looked at overdressed and heavily perfumed women, and every one of them glanced at me as though she would say: "You are alone; that's all right." Then I went out on the terrace and looked for a long time at the sea. There was not one sail on the horizon. On the left bank, in the lilac-coloured mist, there were mountains, gardens, towers, and houses, the sun was sparkling over it all, but it was all alien, indifferent, an incomprehensible tangle.

XVII

She used as before to come into my room in the morning to coffee, but we no longer dined together, as she said she was not hungry; and she lived only on coffee, tea, and various trifles such as oranges and caramels.

And we no longer had conversations in the evening. I don't know why it was like this. Ever since the day when I had found her in tears she had treated me somehow lightly, at times casually, even ironically, and for some reason called me "My good sir." What had before seemed to her terrible, heroic, marvellous, and had stirred her envy and enthusiasm, did not touch her now at all, and usually after listening to me, she stretched and said:

"Yes, 'great things were done in days of yore,' my good sir."

... door and listen; then tr
pass and say coldly, "*Madam*
would walk about the passage
walk. . . . English people,
waiters in swallow-tails. . . .
at the long striped rug that str
of the corridor, the idea occur
ing in the life of this woman a
part, and that it is beyond m
part. I run to my room and
think and think, and can come
all that is clear to me is that I
the plainer and the colder an
grows, the nearer she is to r
tensely and painfully I feel
mind "My good sir," never m
tone, never mind anything you
me, my treasure. I am afrai

Then I go out into the corri
tremor. . . . I have no dinne
approach of evening. At last
the familiar footstep, and at th
Zinaida Fyodorovna comes into

"Are you taking a walk?"

"Tell me, where have you been?" I would ask, following her into the room.

"Where? To Monte Carlo." She took ten gold coins out of her pocket and said: "Look, my good sir; I have won. That's at roulette."

"Nonsense! As though you would gamble."

"Why not? I am going again to-morrow."

I imagined her with a sick and morbid face, in her condition, tightly laced, standing near the gaming-table in a crowd of cocottes, of old women in their dotage who swarm round the gold like flies round the honey. I remembered she had gone off to Monte Carlo for some reason in secret from me.

"I don't believe you," I said one day. "You wouldn't go there."

"Don't agitate yourself. I can't lose much."

"It's not the question of what you lose," I said with annoyance. "Has it never occurred to you while you were playing there that the glitter of gold, all these women, young and old, the croupiers, all the surroundings — that it is all a vile, loathsome mockery at the toiler's labour, at his bloody sweat?"

"If one doesn't play, what is one to do here?" she asked. "The toiler's labour and his bloody sweat — all that eloquence you can put off till another time; but now, since you have begun, let me go on. Let me ask you bluntly, what is there for me to do here, and what am I to do?"

"What are you to do?" I said, shrugging my shoulders. "That's a question that can't be answered straight off."

beg you to answer me honestly, Vladimir Ivan-
she said, and her face looked angry. "Once
brought myself to ask you this question, I am
ing to listen to stock phrases. I am asking
she went on, beating her hand on the table, as
marking time, "what ought I to do here?
ot only here at Nice, but in general?"
d not speak, but looked out of window to the
My heart was beating terribly.
adimir Ivanitch," she said softly and breath-
it was hard for her to speak—"Vladimir
h, if you do not believe in the cause yourself,
no longer think of going back to it, why . . .
d you drag me out of Petersburg? Why did
ake me promises, why did you rouse mad
Your convictions have changed; you have
a different man, and nobody blames you for

should have to go through what I have been through."

I felt that I was on the point of tears, and ceased speaking.

"Vladimir Ivanitch," she said, and took me by both hands, "you have been through so much and seen so much of life, you know more than I do; think seriously, and tell me, what am I to do? Teach me! If you haven't the strength to go forward yourself and take others with you, at least show me where to go. After all, I am a living, feeling, thinking being. To sink into a false position . . . to play an absurd part . . . is painful to me. I don't reproach you, I don't blame you; I only ask you."

Tea was brought in.

"Well?" said Zinaida Fyodorovna, giving me a glass. "What do you say to me?"

"There is more light in the world than you see through your window," I answered. "And there are other people besides me, Zinaida Fyodorovna."

"Then tell me who they are," she said eagerly. "That's all I ask of you."

"And I want to say, too," I went on, "one can serve an idea in more than one calling. If one has made a mistake and lost faith in one, one may find another. The world of ideas is large and cannot be exhausted."

"The world of ideas!" she said, and she looked into my face sarcastically. "Then we had better leave off talking. What's the use? . . ."

She flushed.

"The world of ideas!" she repeated. She threw

linner-napkin aside, and an expression of indig-
n and contempt came into her face. "All your
deas, I see, lead up to one inevitable, essential
I ought to become your mistress. That's
's wanted. To be taken up with ideas without
the mistress of an honourable, progressive
is as good as not understanding the ideas.
has to begin with that . . . that is, with being
mistress, and the rest will come of itself."
You are irritated, Zinaida Fyodorovna," I said.
No, I am sincere!" she cried, breathing hard.
m sincere!"
You are sincere, perhaps, but you are in error,
t hurts me to hear you."
I am in error?" she laughed. "Any one else
t say that, but not you, my dear sir! I may
to you indelicate, cruel, but I don't care; you

"You speak to me as though you suspected me of dishonourable intentions," I said, offended.

"Oh, very well. What's the use of talking! I don't suspect you of intentions, but of having no intentions. If you had any, I should have known them by now. You had nothing but ideas and love. For the present — ideas and love, and in prospect — me as your mistress. That's in the order of things both in life and in novels. . . . Here you abused him," she said, and she slapped the table with her hand, "but one can't help agreeing with him. He has good reasons for despising these ideas."

"He does not despise ideas; he is afraid of them," I cried. "He is a coward and a liar."

"Oh, very well. He is a coward and a liar, and deceived me. And you? Excuse my frankness; what are you? He deceived me and left me to take my chance in Petersburg, and you have deceived me and abandoned me here. But he did not mix up ideas with his deceit, and you . . ."

"For goodness' sake, why are you saying this?" I cried in horror, wringing my hands and going up to her quickly. "No, Zinaida Fyodorovna, this is cynicism. You must not be so despairing; listen to me," I went on, catching at a thought which flashed dimly upon me, and which seemed to me might still save us both. "Listen. I have passed through so many experiences in my time that my head goes round at the thought of them, and I have realised with my mind, with my racked soul, that man finds his true destiny in nothing if not in self-sacrificing love for his neighbour. It is towards that we must

nd that is our destination! That is my

ted to go on to speak of mercy, of forgive- there was an insincere note in my voice, and nbarrassed.

nt to live!" I said genuinely. "To live, to want peace, tranquillity; I want warmth — here — to have you near. Oh, how I wish rouse in you the same thirst for life! You st now of love, but it would be enough for ave you near, to hear your voice, to watch in your face . . .!"

ushed crimson, and to hinder my speaking, kly:

love life, and I hate it. So our ways lie

most fainting with terror ran to Zinaida Fyodorovna. In her room I found a doctor, a midwife, and an elderly Russian lady from Harkov, called Darya Milhailovna. There was a smell of ether. I had scarcely crossed the threshold when from the room where she was lying I heard a low, plaintive moan, and, as though it had been wafted me by the wind from Russia, I thought of Orlov, his irony, Polya, the Neva, the drifting snow, then the cab without an apron, the prediction I had read in the cold morning sky, and the despairing cry "Nina! Nina!"

"Go in to her," said the lady.

I went in to see Zinaida Fyodorovna, feeling as though I were the father of the child. She was lying with her eyes closed, looking thin and pale, wearing a white cap edged with lace. I remember there were two expressions on her face: one — cold, indifferent, apathetic; the other — a look of childish helplessness given her by the white cap. She did not hear me come in, or heard, perhaps, but did not pay attention. I stood, looked at her, and waited.

But her face was contorted with pain; she opened her eyes and gazed at the ceiling, as though wondering what was happening to her. . . . There was a look of loathing on her face.

"It's horrible . . ." she whispered.

"Zinaida Fyodorovna." I spoke her name softly. She looked at me indifferently, listlessly, and closed her eyes. I stood there a little while, then went away.

At night, Darya Mihailovna informed me that

ld, a girl, was born, but that the mother was in
gerous condition. Then I heard noise and
in the passage. Darya Mihailovna came to
ain and with a face of despair, wringing her
said:
h, this is awful! The doctor suspects that she
ken poison! Oh, how badly Russians do be-
ere!"
at twelve o'clock the next day Zinaida Fyodo-
died.

XVIII

years had passed. Circumstances had
d; I had come to Petersburg again and could
re openly. I was no longer afraid of being

stroked my face so lovingly and were clasped round my neck.

Sonya's future made me anxious. Orlov was her father; in her birth certificate she was called Krasnovsky, and the only person who knew of her existence, and took interest in her — that is, I — was at death's door. I had to think about her seriously.

The day after I arrived in Petersburg I went to see Orlov. The door was opened to me by a stout old fellow with red whiskers and no moustache, who looked like a German. Polya, who was tidying the drawing-room, did not recognise me, but Orlov knew me at once.

"Ah, Mr. Revolutionist!" he said, looking at me with curiosity, and laughing. "What fate has brought you?"

He was not changed in the least: the same well-groomed, unpleasant face, the same irony. And a new book was lying on the table just as of old, with an ivory paper-knife thrust in it. He had evidently been reading before I came in. He made me sit down, offered me a cigar, and with a delicacy only found in well-bred people, concealing the unpleasant feeling aroused by my face and my wasted figure, observed casually that I was not in the least changed, and that he would have known me anywhere in spite of my having grown a beard. We talked of the weather, of Paris. To dispose as quickly as possible of the oppressive, inevitable question, which weighed upon him and me, he asked:

"Zinaida Fyodorovna is dead?"

'es," I answered.
n childbirth?"
'es, in childbirth. The doctor suspected an-
cause of death, but . . . it is more comforting
ou and for me to think that she died in child-
"

sighed decorously and was silent. The angel
ence passed over us, as they say.
'es. And here everything is as it used to be
changes," he said briskly, seeing that I was
ng about the room. "My father, as you know,
ft the service and is living in retirement; I am
n the same department. Do you remember
sky? He is just the same as ever. Gruzin
of diphtheria a year ago. . . . Kukushkin is
and often speaks of you. By the way," said

here with me Zinaida Fyodorovna's daughter. . . . Hitherto I have brought her up, but, as you see, before many days I shall be an empty sound. I should like to die with the thought that she is provided for."

Orlov coloured a little, frowned a little, and took a cursory and sullen glance at me. He was unpleasantly affected, not so much by the "important matter" as by my words about death, about becoming an empty sound.

"Yes, it must be thought about," he said, screening his eyes as though from the sun. "Thank you. You say it's a girl?"

"Yes, a girl. A wonderful child!"

"Yes. Of course, it's not a lap-dog, but a human being. I understand we must consider it seriously. I am prepared to do my part, and am very grateful to you."

He got up, walked about, biting his nails, and stopped before a picture.

"We must think about it," he said in a hollow voice, standing with his back to me. "I shall go to Pekarsky's to-day and will ask him to go to Krasnovsky's. I don't think he will make much ado about consenting to take the child."

"But, excuse me, I don't see what Krasnovsky has got to do with it," I said, also getting up and walking to a picture at the other end of the room.

"But she bears his name, of course!" said Orlov.

"Yes, he may be legally obliged to accept the child — I don't know; but I came to you, Georgy Ivanitch, not to discuss the legal aspect."

"Yes, yes, you are right," he agreed briskly. "I

Pekarsky will arrange it all
me your address and I will
we decide. Where are yo

Orlov wrote down my
with a smile:

"Oh, Lord, what a job
little daughter! But Pek
He is a sensible man. Did

"Two months."

We were silent. Orlo
should begin talking of th
my attention in another di

"You have probably for
But I have kept it. I und
time, and, I must own, I res
able cold blood,' 'Asiatic
was charming and characte
ironical smile. "And the
perhaps near the truth, tho
question endlessly. That i
pute the thought itself, but
tion — your temperament,
abnormal, corrupted, of no

"A living man cannot help being troubled and reduced to despair when he sees that he himself is going to ruin and others are going to ruin round him."

"Who doubts it! I am not advocating indifference; all I ask for is an objective attitude to life. The more objective, the less danger of falling into error. One must look into the root of things, and try to see in every phenomenon a cause of all the other causes. We have grown feeble, slack — degraded, in fact. Our generation is entirely composed of neurasthenics and whimperers; we do nothing but talk of fatigue and exhaustion. But the fault is neither yours nor mine; we are of too little consequence to affect the destiny of a whole generation. We must suppose for that larger, more general causes with a solid *raison d'être* from the biological point of view. We are neurasthenics, flabby, renegades, but perhaps it's necessary and of service for generations that will come after us. Not one hair falls from the head without the will of the Heavenly Father — in other words, nothing happens by chance in Nature and in human environment. Everything has its cause and is inevitable. And if so, why should we worry and write despairing letters?"

"That's all very well," I said, thinking a little. "I believe it will be easier and clearer for the generations to come; our experience will be at their service. But one wants to live apart from future generations and not only for their sake. Life is only given us once, and one wants to live it boldly, with full consciousness and beauty. One wants to play a striking, independent, noble part; one wants to make history

t those generations may not have the right to
f each of us that we were nonentities or
. . . I believe what is going on about us is
ble and not without a purpose, but what have
with that inevitability? Why should my *ego*
?"

ell, there's no help for it," sighed Orlov, get-
and, as it were, giving me to understand that
nversation was over.

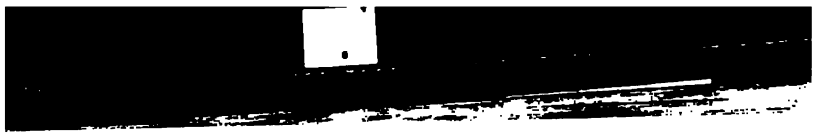
ok my hat.

e've only been sitting here half an hour, and
any questions we have settled, when you come
k of it!" said Orlov, seeing me into the hall.
will see to that matter. . . . I will see Pekar-
day. . . . Don't be uneasy."

stood waiting while I put on my coat, and was

certificate with me, if I had it. " Rest assured of the sincere respect and devotion of your humble servant. . . ."

I read this letter, and Sonya sat on the table and gazed at me attentively without blinking, as though she knew her fate was being decided.



THE HUSBAND

THE HUSBAND

In the course of the manœuvres the N—— cavalry regiment halted for a night at the district town of K——. Such an event as the visit of officers always has the most exciting and inspiring effect on the inhabitants of provinicial towns. The shopkeepers dream of getting rid of the rusty sausages and "best brand" sardines that have been lying for ten years on their shelves; the inns and restaurants keep open all night; the Military Commandant, his secretary, and the local garrison put on their best uniforms; the police flit to and fro like mad, while the effect on the ladies is beyond all description.

The ladies of K——, hearing the regiment approaching, forsook their pans of boiling jam and ran into the street. Forgetting their morning *deshabille* and general untidiness, they rushed breathless with excitement to meet the regiment, and listened greedily to the band playing the march. Looking at their pale, ecstatic faces, one might have thought those strains came from some heavenly choir rather than from a military brass band.

"The regiment!" they cried joyfully. "The regiment is coming!"

What could this unknown regiment that came by chance to-day and would depart at dawn to-morrow mean to them?

Afterwards, when the officers were standing in the middle of the square, and, with their hands behind them, discussing the question of billets, all the ladies were gathered together at the examining magistrate's and vying with one another in their criticisms of the regiment. They already knew, goodness knows how, that the colonel was married, but not living with his wife; that the senior officer's wife had a baby born dead every year; that the adjutant was hopelessly in love with some countess, and had even once attempted suicide. They knew everything. When a pock-marked soldier in a red shirt darted past the windows, they knew for certain that it was Lieutenant Rymzov's orderly running about the town, trying to get some English bitter ale on tick for his master. They had only caught a passing glimpse of the officers' backs, but had already decided that there was not one handsome or interesting man among them. . . . Having talked to their hearts' content, they sent for the Military Commandant and the committee of the club, and instructed them at all costs to make arrangements for a dance.

Their wishes were carried out. At nine o'clock in the evening the military band was playing in the street before the club, while in the club itself the officers were dancing with the ladies of K——. The ladies felt as though they were on wings. Intoxicated by the dancing, the music, and the clank of spurs, they threw themselves heart and soul into making the acquaintance of their new partners, and quite forgot their old civilian friends. Their fathers and husbands, forced temporarily into the background,

crowded round the meagre refreshment table in the entrance hall. All these government cashiers, secretaries, clerks, and superintendents — stale, sickly-looking, clumsy figures — were perfectly well aware of their inferiority. They did not even enter the ball-room, but contented themselves with watching their wives and daughters in the distance dancing with the accomplished and graceful officers.

Among the husbands was Shalikov, the tax-collector — a narrow, spiteful soul, given to drink, with a big, closely cropped head, and thick, protruding lips. He had had a university education; there had been a time when he used to read progressive literature and sing students' songs, but now, as he said of himself, he was a tax-collector and nothing more.

He stood leaning against the doorpost, his eyes fixed on his wife, Anna Pavlovna, a little brunette of thirty, with a long nose and a pointed chin. Tightly laced, with her face carefully powdered, she danced without pausing for breath — danced till she was ready to drop exhausted. But though she was exhausted in body, her spirit was inexhaustible. . . . One could see as she danced that her thoughts were with the past, that faraway past when she used to dance at the " College for Young Ladies," dreaming of a life of luxury and gaiety, and never doubting that her husband was to be a prince or, at the worst, a baron.

The tax-collector watched, scowling with spite. . . .

It was not jealousy he was feeling. He was ill-humoured — first, because the room was taken up

with dancing and there was nowhere he could play a game of cards; secondly, because he could not endure the sound of wind instruments; and, thirdly, because he fancied the officers treated the civilians somewhat too casually and disdainfully. But what above everything revolted him and moved him to indignation was the expression of happiness on his wife's face.

"It makes me sick to look at her!" he muttered. "Going on for forty, and nothing to boast of at any time, and she must powder her face and lace herself up! And frizzing her hair! Flirting and making faces, and fancying she's doing the thing in style! Ugh! you're a pretty figure, upon my soul!"

Anna Pavlovna was so lost in the dance that she did not once glance at her husband.

"Of course not! Where do we poor country bumpkins come in!" sneered the tax-collector. "We are at a discount now. . . . We're clumsy seals, unpolished provincial bears, and she's the queen of the ball! She has kept enough of her looks to please even officers. . . . They'd not object to making love to her, I dare say!"

During the mazurka the tax-collector's face twitched with spite. A black-haired officer with prominent eyes and Tartar cheekbones danced the mazurka with Anna Pavlovna. Assuming a stern expression, he worked his legs with gravity and feeling, and so crooked his knees that he looked like a jack-a-dandy pulled by strings, while Anna Pavlovna, pale and thrilled, bending her figure languidly and turning her eyes up, tried to look as though she

scarcely touched the floor, and evidently felt herself that she was not on earth, not at the local club, but somewhere far, far away — in the clouds. Not only her face but her whole figure was expressive of beatitude. . . . The tax-collector could endure it no longer; he felt a desire to jeer at that beatitude, to make Anna Pavlovna feel that she had forgotten herself, that life was by no means so delightful as she fancied now in her excitement. . . .

"You wait; I'll teach you to smile so blissfully," he muttered. "You are not a boarding-school miss, you are not a girl. An old fright ought to realise she is a fright!"

Petty feelings of envy, vexation, wounded vanity, of that small, provincial misanthropy engendered in petty officials by vodka and a sedentary life, swarmed in his heart like mice. Waiting for the end of the mazurka, he went into the hall and walked up to his wife. Anna Pavlovna was sitting with her partner, and, flirting her fan and coquettishly dropping her eyelids, was describing how she used to dance in Petersburg (her lips were pursed up like a rosebud, and she pronounced "at home in Pütürsburg").

"Anyuta, let us go home," croaked the tax-collector.

Seeing her husband standing before her, Anna Pavlovna started as though recalling the fact that she had a husband; then she flushed all over: she felt ashamed that she had such a sickly-looking, ill-humoured, ordinary husband.

"Let us go home," repeated the tax-collector.

"Why? It's quite early!"

. . . at once. . . . I wis
without further talk, please
Anna Pavlovna was not a
she felt ashamed on account
looking at her husband w
ment. She got up and mov
husband.
"What notion is this?"
home? Why, it's not eleve
"I wish it, and that's enc
that's all about it."
"Don't be silly! Go h
to."
"All right; then I shall m
The tax-collector saw the
ally vanish from his wife's
and miserable she was — anc
"Why do you want me at
"I don't want you, but I
I wish it, that's all."
At first Anna Pavlovna ref
she began entreating her husb
another half-hour; then, with
began to apologise, to protest

other ten minutes, only five minutes; but the tax-collector stuck obstinately to his point.

"Stay if you like," he said, "but I'll make a scene if you do."

And as she talked to her husband Anna Pavlovna looked thinner, older, plainer. Pale, biting her lips, and almost crying, she went out to the entry and began putting on her things.

"You are not going?" asked the ladies in surprise. "Anna Pavlovna, you are not going, dear?"

"Her head aches," said the tax-collector for his wife.

Coming out of the club, the husband and wife walked all the way home in silence. The tax-collector walked behind his wife, and watching her downcast, sorrowful, humiliated little figure, he recalled the look of beatitude which had so irritated him at the club, and the consciousness that the beatitude was gone filled his soul with triumph. He was pleased and satisfied, and at the same time he felt the lack of something; he would have liked to go back to the club and make every one feel dreary and miserable, so that all might know how stale and worthless life is when you walk along the streets in the dark and hear the slush of the mud under your feet, and when you know that you will wake up next morning with nothing to look forward to but vodka and cards. Oh, how awful it is!

And Anna Pavlovna could scarcely walk. . . . She was still under the influence of the dancing, the music, the talk, the lights, and the noise; she asked herself as she walked along why God had thus

was fully aware that no wor
collector's hide. What di
Her bitterest enemy could n
a more helpless position.

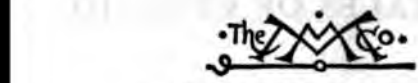
And meanwhile the ban
darkness was full of the m
dance-tunes.

THE EN

THE TALES OF CHEKHOV

THE WITCH

AND OTHER STORIES



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NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
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MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
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THE WITCH

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

ANTON CHEKHOV

FROM THE RUSSIAN BY

CONSTANCE GARNETT

WILLEY BOOK COMPANY

NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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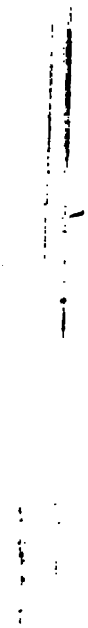
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and printed. Published April, 1918

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Witch	3
Peasant Wives	25
The Post	49
The New Villa	61
Dreams	85
The Pipe	101
Agafya	117
At Christmas Time	135
Gusev	145
The Student	169
In the Ravine	177
The Huntsman	241
Happiness	251
A Malefactor	269
Peasants	279



THE WITCH

THE TALES OF CHEKHOV

THE WITCH

It was approaching nightfall. The sexton, Savély Gykin, was lying in his huge bed in the hut adjoining the church. He was not asleep, though it was his habit to go to sleep at the same time as the hens. His coarse red hair peeped from under one end of the greasy patchwork quilt, made up of coloured rags, while his big unwashed feet stuck out from the other. He was listening. His hut adjoined the wall that encircled the church and the solitary window in it looked out upon the open country. And out there a regular battle was going on. It was hard to say who was being wiped off the face of the earth, and for the sake of whose destruction nature was being churned up into such a ferment; but, judging from the unceasing malignant roar, someone was getting it very hot. A victorious force was in full chase over the fields, storming in the forest and on the church roof, battering spitefully with its fists upon the windows, raging and tearing, while something vanquished was howling and wailing. . . . A plaintive lament sobbed at the window, on the roof, or in the stove. It sounded not like a call for help, but like a cry of misery, a consciousness that it was too late, that there was no salvation. The snow-

s were covered with a thin coating of ice; tears
ered on them and on the trees; a dark slush of
and melting snow flowed along the roads and
s. In short, it was thawing, but through the
night the heavens failed to see it, and flung
s of fresh snow upon the melting earth at a
ic rate. And the wind staggered like a drunk-
It would not let the snow settle on the ground,
whirled it round in the darkness at random.
vély listened to all this din and frowned. The
was that he knew, or at any rate suspected,
all this racket outside the window was tending
d whose handiwork it was.
I know!" he muttered, shaking his finger men-
gly under the bedclothes; "I know all about it."
n a stool by the window sat the sexton's wife,

beautiful fountain expresses nothing when it is not playing.

But at last she had finished a sack. She flung it aside, and, stretching luxuriously, rested her motionless, lack-lustre eyes on the window. The panes were swimming with drops like tears, and white with short-lived snowflakes which fell on the window, glanced at Raïssa, and melted. . . .

"Come to bed!" growled the sexton. Raïssa remained mute. But suddenly her eyelashes flickered and there was a gleam of attention in her eye. Savély, all the time watching her expression from under the quilt, put out his head and asked:

"What is it?"

"Nothing. . . . I fancy someone's coming," she answered quietly.

The sexton flung the quilt off with his arms and legs, knelt up in bed, and looked blankly at his wife. The timid light of the lamp illuminated his hirsute, pock-marked countenance and glided over his rough matted hair.

"Do you hear?" asked his wife.

Through the monotonous roar of the storm he caught a scarcely audible thin and jingling monotone like the shrill note of a gnat when it wants to settle on one's cheek and is angry at being prevented.

"It's the post," muttered Savély, squatting on his heels.

Two miles from the church ran the posting road. In windy weather, when the wind was blowing from the road to the church, the inmates of the hut caught the sound of bells.

"Lord! fancy people wanting to drive about in such weather," sighed Raïssa.

"It's government work. You've to go whether you like or not."

The murmur hung in the air and died away.

"It has driven by," said Savély, getting into bed.

But before he had time to cover himself up with the bedclothes he heard a distinct sound of the bell. The sexton looked anxiously at his wife, leapt out of bed and walked, waddling, to and fro by the stove. The bell went on ringing for a little, then died away again as though it had ceased.

"I don't hear it," said the sexton, stopping and looking at his wife with his eyes screwed up.

But at that moment the wind rapped on the window and with it floated a shrill jingling note. Savély turned pale, cleared his throat, and flopped about the floor with his bare feet again.

"The postman is lost in the storm," he wheezed out glancing malignantly at his wife. "Do you hear? The postman has lost his way! . . . I . . . I know! Do you suppose I . . . don't understand?" he muttered. "I know all about it, curse you!"

"What do you know?" Raïssa asked quietly, keeping her eyes fixed on the window.

"I know that it's all your doing, you she-devil! Your doing, damn you! This snowstorm and the post going wrong, you've done it all — you!"

"You're mad, you silly," his wife answered calmly.

"I've been watching you for a long time past and

I've seen it. From the first day I married you I noticed that you'd bitch's blood in you!"

"Tfoo!" said Raïssa, surprised, shrugging her shoulders and crossing herself. "Cross yourself, you fool!"

"A witch is a witch," Savély pronounced in a hollow, tearful voice, hurriedly blowing his nose on the hem of his shirt; "though you are my wife, though you are of a clerical family, I'd say what you are even at confession. . . . Why, God have mercy upon us! Last year on the Eve of the Prophet Daniel and the Three Young Men there was a snowstorm, and what happened then? The mechanic came in to warm himself. Then on St. Alexey's Day the ice broke on the river and the district policeman turned up, and he was chatting with you all night . . . the damned brute! And when he came out in the morning and I looked at him, he had rings under his eyes and his cheeks were hollow! Eh? During the August fast there were two storms and each time the huntsman turned up. I saw it all, damn him! Oh, she is redder than a crab now, aha!"

"You didn't see anything."

"Didn't I! And this winter before Christmas on the Day of the Ten Martyrs of Crete, when the storm lasted for a whole day and night — do you remember? — the marshal's clerk was lost, and turned up here, the hound. . . . Tfoo! To be tempted by the clerk! It was worth upsetting God's weather for him! A drivelling scribbler, not a foot from the ground, pimples all over his mug and his

neck awry! If he were good-looking, anyway — but he, tfoo! he is as ugly as Satan!"

The sexton took breath, wiped his lips and listened. The bell was not to be heard, but the wind banged on the roof, and again there came a tinkle in the darkness.

"And it's the same thing now!" Savély went on. "It's not for nothing the postman is lost! Blast my eyes if the postman isn't looking for you! Oh, the devil is a good hand at his work; he is a fine one to help! He will turn him round and round and bring him here. I know, I see! You can't conceal it, you devil's bauble, you heathen wanton! As soon as the storm began I knew what you were up to."

"Here's a fool!" smiled his wife. "Why, do you suppose, you thick-head, that I make the storm?"

"H'm! . . . Grin away! Whether it's your doing or not, I only know that when your blood's on fire there's sure to be bad weather, and when there's bad weather there's bound to be some crazy fellow turning up here. It happens so every time! So it must be you!"

To be more impressive the sexton put his finger to his forehead, closed his left eye, and said in a singsong voice:

"Oh, the madness! oh, the unclean Judas! If you really are a human being and not a witch, you ought to think what if he is not the mechanic, or the clerk, or the huntsman, but the devil in their form! Ah! You'd better think of that!"

"Why, you are stupid, Savély," said his wife, looking at him compassionately. "When father was alive and living here, all sorts of people used to come to him to be cured of the ague: from the village, and the hamlets, and the Armenian settlement. They came almost every day, and no one called them devils. But if anyone once a year comes in bad weather to warm himself, you wonder at it, you silly, and take all sorts of notions into your head at once."

His wife's logic touched Savély. He stood with his bare feet wide apart, bent his head, and pondered. He was not firmly convinced yet of the truth of his suspicions, and his wife's genuine and unconcerned tone quite disconcerted him. Yet after a moment's thought he wagged his head and said:

"It's not as though they were old men or bandy-legged cripples; it's always young men who want to come for the night. . . . Why is that? And if they only wanted to warm themselves —— But they are up to mischief. No, woman; there's no creature in this world as cunning as your female sort! Of real brains you've not an ounce, less than a starling, but for devilish slyness — oo-oo-oo! The Queen of Heaven protect us! There is the postman's bell! When the storm was only beginning I knew all that was in your mind. That's your witchery, you spider!"

"Why do you keep on at me, you heathen?" His wife lost her patience at last. "Why do you keep sticking to it like pitch?"

"I stick to it because if anything — God forbid

— happens to-night . . . do you hear? . . . if anything happens to-night, I'll go straight off to-morrow morning to Father Nikodim and tell him all about it. 'Father Nikodim,' I shall say, 'graciously excuse me, but she is a witch.' 'Why so?' 'H'm! do you want to know why?' 'Certainly. . . .' And I shall tell him. And woe to you, woman! Not only at the dread Seat of Judgment, but in your earthly life you'll be punished, too! It's not for nothing there are prayers in the breviary against your kind!"

Suddenly there was a knock at the window, so loud and unusual that Savély turned pale and almost dropped backwards with fright. His wife jumped up, and she, too, turned pale.

"For God's sake, let us come in and get warm!" they heard in a trembling deep bass. "Who lives here? For mercy's sake! We've lost our way."

"Who are you?" asked Raïssa, afraid to look at the window.

"The post," answered a second voice.

"You've succeeded with your devil's tricks," said Savély with a wave of his hand. "No mistake; I am right! Well, you'd better look out!"

The sexton jumped on to the bed in two skips, stretched himself on the feather mattress, and sniffing angrily, turned with his face to the wall. Soon he felt a draught of cold air on his back. The door creaked and the tall figure of a man, plastered over with snow from head to foot, appeared in the doorway. Behind him could be seen a second figure as white.

"Am I to bring in the bags?" asked the second in a hoarse bass voice.

"You can't leave them there." Saying this, the first figure began untying his hood, but gave it up, and pulling it off impatiently with his cap, angrily flung it near the stove. Then taking off his great-coat, he threw that down beside it, and, without saying good-evening, began pacing up and down the hut.

He was a fair-haired, young postman wearing a shabby uniform and black rusty-looking high boots. After warming himself by walking to and fro, he sat down at the table, stretched out his muddy feet towards the sacks and leaned his chin on his fist. His pale face, reddened in places by the cold, still bore vivid traces of the pain and terror he had just been through. Though distorted by anger and bearing traces of recent suffering, physical and moral, it was handsome in spite of the melting snow on the eyebrows, moustaches, and short beard.

"It's a dog's life!" muttered the postman, looking round the walls and seeming hardly able to believe that he was in the warmth. "We were nearly lost! If it had not been for your light, I don't know what would have happened. Goodness only knows when it will all be over! There's no end to this dog's life! Where have we come?" he asked, dropping his voice and raising his eyes to the sexton's wife.

"To the Gulyaevsky Hill on General Kalinovsky's estate," she answered, startled and blushing.

"Do you hear, Stepan?" The postman turned

to the driver, who was wedged in the doorway with a huge mail-bag on his shoulders. "We've got to Gulyaevsky Hill."

"Yes . . . we're a long way out." Jerking out these words like a hoarse sigh, the driver went out and soon after returned with another bag, then went out once more and this time brought the postman's sword on a big belt, of the pattern of that long flat blade with which Judith is portrayed by the bedside of Holofernes in cheap woodcuts. Laying the bags along the wall, he went out into the outer room, sat down there and lighted his pipe.

"Perhaps you'd like some tea after your journey?" Raïssa inquired.

"How can we sit drinking tea?" said the postman, frowning. "We must make haste and get warm, and then set off, or we shall be late for the mail train. We'll stay ten minutes and then get on our way. Only be so good as to show us the way."

"What an infliction it is, this weather!" sighed Raïssa.

"H'm, yes. . . . Who may you be?"

"We? We live here, by the church. . . . We belong to the clergy. . . . There lies my husband. Savély, get up and say good-evening! This used to be a separate parish till eighteen months ago. Of course, when the gentry lived here there were more people, and it was worth while to have the services. But now the gentry have gone, and I need not tell you there's nothing for the clergy to live on. The nearest village is Markovka, and that's over three

miles away. Savély is on the retired list now, and has got the watchman's job; he has to look after the church. . . ."

And the postman was immediately informed that if Savély were to go to the General's lady and ask her for a letter to the bishop, he would be given a good berth. "But he doesn't go to the General's lady because he is lazy and afraid of people. We belong to the clergy all the same . . ." added Raïssa.

"What do you live on?" asked the postman.

"There's a kitchen garden and a meadow belonging to the church. Only we don't get much from that," sighed Raïssa. "The old skinflint, Father Nikodim, from the next village celebrates here on St. Nicolas' Day in the winter and on St. Nicolas' Day in the summer, and for that he takes almost all the crops for himself. There's no one to stick up for us!"

"You are lying," Savély growled hoarsely. "Father Nikodim is a saintly soul, a luminary of the Church; and if he does take it, it's the regulation!"

"You've a cross one!" said the postman, with a grin. "Have you been married long?"

"It was three years ago the last Sunday before Lent. My father was sexton here in the old days, and when the time came for him to die, he went to the Consistory and asked them to send some unmarried man to marry me that I might keep the place. So I married him."

"Aha, so you killed two birds with one stone!"

ıe postman, looking at Savély's back. "Got
ıd job together."
ély wriggled his leg impatiently and moved
to the wall. The postman moved away from
ble, stretched, and sat down on the mail-bag.
a moment's thought he squeezed the bags with
nds, shifted his sword to the other side, and
wn with one foot touching the floor.
s a dog's life," he muttered, putting his hands
his head and closing his eyes. "I wouldn't
wild Tatar such a life."
n everything was still. Nothing was audible
the sniffing of Savély and the slow, even
ng of the sleeping postman, who uttered a
prolonged "h-h-h" at every breath. From
time there was a sound like a creaking wheel

askance at his wife. She was still sitting motionless, staring at the visitor. Her cheeks were pale and her eyes were glowing with a strange fire. The sexton cleared his throat, crawled on his stomach off the bed, and going up to the postman, put a handkerchief over his face.

"What's that for?" asked his wife.

"To keep the light out of his eyes."

"Then put out the light!"

Savély looked distrustfully at his wife, put out his lips towards the lamp, but at once thought better of it and clasped his hands.

"Isn't that devilish cunning?" he exclaimed. "Ah! Is there any creature slyer than womenkind?"

"Ah, you long-skirted devil!" hissed his wife, frowning with vexation. "You wait a bit!"

And settling herself more comfortably, she stared at the postman again.

It did not matter to her that his face was covered. She was not so much interested in his face as in his whole appearance, in the novelty of this man. His chest was broad and powerful, his hands were slender and well formed, and his graceful, muscular legs were much comelier than Savély's stumps. There could be no comparison, in fact.

"Though I am a long-skirted devil," Savély said after a brief interval, "they've no business to sleep here. . . . It's government work; we shall have to answer for keeping them. If you carry the letters, carry them, you can't go to sleep. . . . Hey! you!" Savély shouted into the outer room. "You, driver.

What's your name? Shall I show you the
? Get up; postmen mustn't sleep!"
nd Savély, thoroughly roused, ran up to the post-
and tugged him by the sleeve.
Hey, your honour, if you must go, go; and if
don't, it's not the thing. . . . Sleeping won't

ne postman jumped up, sat down, looked with
eyes round the hut, and lay down again.
But when are you going?" Savély pattered
. "That's what the post is for — to get there
od time, do you hear? I'll take you."
ne postman opened his eyes. Warmed and re-
by his first sweet sleep, and not yet quite awake,
aw as through a mist the white neck and the
yable, alluring eyes of the sexton's wife. He

the outer room. "All days are not alike; the train may be late for a bit of luck."

The postman got up, and stretching lazily began putting on his coat.

Savély positively neighed with delight when he saw his visitors were getting ready to go.

"Give us a hand," the driver shouted to him as he lifted up a mail-bag.

The sexton ran out and helped him drag the post-bags into the yard. The postman began undoing the knot in his hood. The sexton's wife gazed into his eyes, and seemed trying to look right into his soul.

"You ought to have a cup of tea . . ." she said.

"I wouldn't say no . . . but, you see, they're getting ready," he assented. "We are late, anyway."

"Do stay," she whispered, dropping her eyes and touching him by the sleeve.

The postman got the knot undone at last and flung the hood over his elbow, hesitating. He felt it comfortable standing by Raïssa.

"What a . . . neck you've got! . . ." And he touched her neck with two fingers. Seeing that she did not resist, he stroked her neck and shoulders.

"I say, you are . . ."

"You'd better stay . . . have some tea."

"Where are you putting it?" The driver's voice could be heard outside. "Lay it crossways."

"You'd better stay. . . . Hark how the wind howls."

And the postman, not yet quite awake, not yet

quite able to shake off the intoxicating sleep of youth and fatigue, was suddenly overwhelmed by a desire for the sake of which mail-bags, postal trains . . . and all things in the world, are forgotten. He glanced at the door in a frightened way, as though he wanted to escape or hide himself, seized Raïssa round the waist, and was just bending over the lamp to put out the light, when he heard the tramp of boots in the outer room, and the driver appeared in the doorway. Savély peeped in over his shoulder. The postman dropped his hands quickly and stood still as though irresolute.

"It's all ready," said the driver. The postman stood still for a moment, resolutely threw up his head as though waking up completely, and followed the driver out. Raïssa was left alone.

"Come, get in and show us the way!" she heard.

One bell sounded languidly, then another, and the jingling notes in a long delicate chain floated away from the hut.

When little by little they had died away, Raïssa got up and nervously paced to and fro. At first she was pale, then she flushed all over. Her face was contorted with hate, her breathing was tremulous, her eyes gleamed with wild, savage anger, and, pacing up and down as in a cage, she looked like a tigress menaced with red-hot iron. For a moment she stood still and looked at her abode. Almost half of the room was filled up by the bed, which stretched the length of the whole wall and consisted of a dirty feather-bed, coarse grey pillows, a quilt, and nameless rags of various sorts. The bed was

a shapeless ugly mass which suggested the shock of hair that always stood up on Savély's head whenever it occurred to him to oil it. From the bed to the door that led into the cold outer room stretched the dark stove surrounded by pots and hanging clouts. Everything, including the absent Savély himself, was dirty, greasy, and smutty to the last degree, so that it was strange to see a woman's white neck and delicate skin in such surroundings.

Raïssa ran up to the bed, stretched out her hands as though she wanted to fling it all about, stamp it underfoot, and tear it to shreds. But then, as though frightened by contact with the dirt, she leapt back and began pacing up and down again.

When Savély returned two hours later, worn out and covered with snow, she was undressed and in bed. Her eyes were closed, but from the slight tremor that ran over her face he guessed that she was not asleep. On his way home he had vowed inwardly to wait till next day and not to touch her, but he could not resist a biting taunt at her.

"Your witchery was all in vain: he's gone off," he said, grinning with malignant joy.

His wife remained mute, but her chin quivered. Savély undressed slowly, clambered over his wife, and lay down next to the wall.

"To-morrow I'll let Father Nikodim know what sort of wife you are!" he muttered, curling himself up.

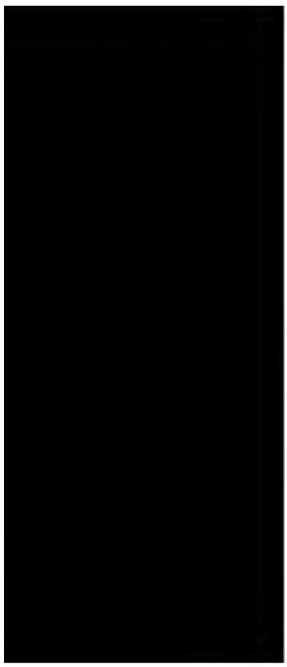
Raïssa turned her face to him and her eyes gleamed.

"The job's enough for you, and you can look for

in the forest, blast you!" she said. "I am
for you, a clumsy lout, a slug-a-bed, God for-
e!"
me, come . . . go to sleep!"
ow miserable I am!" sobbed his wife. "If
n't for you, I might have married a merchant,
e gentleman! If it weren't for you, I should
y husband now! And you haven't been buried
snow, you haven't been frozen on the high-
ou Herod!"
sa cried for a long time. At last she drew
sigh and was still. The storm still raged
t. Something wailed in the stove, in the
y, outside the walls, and it seemed to Savély
e wailing was within him, in his ears. This
g had completely confirmed him in his sus-

"Leave off!" she shouted, and prodded him on the nose with her elbow with such violence that he saw stars before his eyes.

The pain in his nose was soon over, but the torture in his heart remained.



PEASANT WIVES

PEASANT WIVES

In the village of Reybuzh, just facing the church, stands a two-storeyed house with a stone foundation and an iron roof. In the lower storey the owner himself, Filip Ivanov Kashin, nicknamed Dyudya, lives with his family, and on the upper floor, where it is apt to be very hot in summer and very cold in winter, they put up government officials, merchants, or landowners, who chance to be travelling that way. Dyudya rents some bits of land, keeps a tavern on the highroad, does a trade in tar, honey, cattle, and jackdaws, and has already something like eight thousand roubles put by in the bank in the town.

His elder son, Fyodor, is head engineer in the factory, and, as the peasants say of him, he has risen so high in the world that he is quite out of reach now. Fyodor's wife, Sofya, a plain, ailing woman, lives at home at her father-in-law's. She is for ever crying, and every Sunday she goes over to the hospital for medicine. Dyudya's second son, the hunchback Alyoshka, is living at home at his father's. He has only lately been married to Varvara, whom they singled out for him from a poor family. She is a handsome young woman, smart and buxom. When officials or merchants put up at the house, they always insist on having Varvara to bring in the samovar and make their beds.

ne June evening when the sun was setting and
ir was full of the smell of hay, of steaming
-heaps and new milk, a plain-looking cart drove
Dyudya's yard with three people in it: a man
out thirty in a canvas suit, beside him a little
of seven or eight in a long black coat with big
buttons, and on the driver's seat a young fellow
ed shirt.

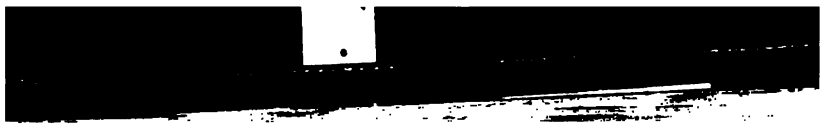
ne young fellow took out the horses and led them
nto the street to walk them up and down a bit,
the traveller washed, said a prayer, turning
rds the church, then spread a rug near the cart
at down with the boy to supper. He ate with-
aste, sedately, and Dyudya, who had seen a
many travellers in his time, knew him from his
ers for a businesslike man, serious and aware

speech, and Dyudya learned from him that he was from the town, was of the tradesman class, and had a house of his own, that his name was Matvey Savitch, that he was on his way now to look at some gardens that he was renting from some German colonists, and that the boy's name was Kuzka. The evening was hot and close, no one felt inclined for sleep. When it was getting dark and pale stars began to twinkle here and there in the sky, Matvey Savitch began to tell how he had come by Kuzka. Afanasyevna and Sofya stood a little way off, listening. Kuzka had gone to the gate.

"It's a complicated story, old man," began Matvey Savitch, "and if I were to tell you all just as it happened, it would take all night and more. Ten years ago in a little house in our street, next door to me, where now there's a tallow and oil factory, there was living an old widow, Marfa Semyonovna Kapluntsev, and she had two sons: one was a guard on the railway, but the other, Vasya, who was just my own age, lived at home with his mother. Old Kapluntsev had kept five pair of horses and sent carriers all over the town; his widow had not given up the business, but managed the carriers as well as her husband had done, so that some days they would bring in as much as five roubles from their rounds.

"The young fellow, too, made a trifle on his own account. He used to breed fancy pigeons and sell them to fanciers; at times he would stand for hours on the roof, waving a broom in the air and whistling; his pigeons were right up in the clouds, but it wasn't enough for him, and he'd want them to go higher

Siskins and starlings, too, he used to c[illegible]atch, he made cages for sale. All trifles, but, [illegible]mind he'd pick up some ten roubles a month over[illegible] such s. Well, as time went on, the old lad[illegible]y lost use of her legs and took to her bed. I[illegible]n consence of which event the house was left wit[illegible]hout a an to look after it, and that's for all the[illegible] world a man without an eye. The old lady bes[illegible]irred lf and made up her mind to marry Vasya. called in a matchmaker at once, the women o talking of one thing and another, and Vasya off to have a look at the girls. He picked out henka, a widow's daughter. They made up minds without loss of time and in a week it all settled. The girl was a little slip of a thing, nteen, but fair-skinned and pretty-looking, and



bore it all right; but as he glanced up at the hay-loft and his pigeons for the last time, he burst out crying. It was pitiful to see him.

"At first Mashenka got her mother to stay with her, that she mightn't be dull all alone; she stayed till the baby — this very Kuzka here — was born, and then she went off to Oboyan to another married daughter's and left Mashenka alone with the baby. There were five peasants — the carriers — a drunken saucy lot; horses, too, and dray-carts to see to, and then the fence would be broken or the soot afire in the chimney — jobs beyond a woman, and through our being neighbours, she got into the way of turning to me for every little thing. . . . Well, I'd go over, set things to rights, and give advice. . . . Naturally, not without going indoors, drinking a cup of tea and having a little chat with her. I was a young fellow, intellectual, and fond of talking on all sorts of subjects; she, too, was well-bred and educated. She was always neatly dressed, and in summer she walked out with a sunshade. Sometimes I would begin upon religion or politics with her, and she was flattered and would entertain me with tea and jam. . . . In a word, not to make a long story of it, I must tell you, old man, a year had not passed before the Evil One, the enemy of all mankind, confounded me. I began to notice that any day I didn't go to see her, I seemed out of sorts and dull. And I'd be continually making up something that I must see her about: 'It's high time,' I'd say to myself, 'to put the double windows in for the winter,' and the whole

I'd idle away over at her place putting in the
ows and take good care to leave a couple of
over for the next day too.
I ought to count over Vasya's pigeons, to see
of them have strayed,' and so on. I used al-
to be talking to her across the fence, and in the
made a little gate in the fence so as not to have
so far round. From womankind comes much
into the world and every kind of abomination.
we sinners only; even the saints themselves have
led astray by them. Mashenka did not try to
me at a distance. Instead of thinking of her
and and being on her guard, she fell in love with
I began to notice that she was dull without me,
was always walking to and fro by the fence look-
nto my yard through the cracks.

clare my love to her. . . . She opened the gate, and from that morning we began to live as man and wife. . . ."

The hunchback Alyoshka came into the yard from the street and ran out of breath into the house, not looking at any one. A minute later he ran out of the house with a concertina. Jingling some coppers in his pocket, and cracking sunflower seeds as he ran, he went out at the gate.

"And who's that, pray?" asked Matvey Savitch.

"My son Alexey," answered Dyudya. "He's off on a spree, the rascal. God has afflicted him with a hump, so we are not very hard on him."

"And he's always drinking with the other fellows, always drinking," sighed Afanasyevna. "Before Carnival we married him, thinking he'd be steadier, but there! he's worse than ever."

"It's been no use. Simply keeping another man's daughter for nothing," said Dyudya.

Somewhere behind the church they began to sing a glorious, mournful song. The words they could not catch and only the voices could be heard — two tenors and a bass. All were listening; there was complete stillness in the yard. . . . Two voices suddenly broke off with a loud roar of laughter, but the third, a tenor, still sang on, and took so high a note that every one instinctively looked upwards, as though the voice had soared to heaven itself.

Varvara came out of the house, and screening her eyes with her hand, as though from the sun, she looked towards the church.

It's the priest's sons with the schoolmaster," she

gain all the three voices began to sing together.
vey Savitch sighed and went on:
Well, that's how it was, old man. Two years
we got a letter from Vasya from Warsaw.
wrote that he was being sent home sick. He
ill. By that time I had put all that foolish-
out of my head, and I had a fine match picked
ll ready for me, only I didn't know how to break
with my sweetheart. Every day I'd make up
nind to have it out with Mashenka, but I didn't
how to approach her so as not to have a wom-
screeching about my ears. The letter freed my
s. I read it through with Mashenka; she
d white as a sheet, while I said to her: 'Thank

and fear God. We must confess it all to Vasya,' said I; 'he's a quiet fellow and soft — he won't kill you. And indeed,' said I, 'better to suffer torments in this world at the hands of your lawful master than to gnash your teeth at the dread Seat of Judgment.' The wench wouldn't listen; she stuck to her silly, 'It's you I love!' and nothing more could I get out of her.

"Vasya came back on the Saturday before Trinity, early in the morning. From my fence I could see everything; he ran into the house, and came back a minute later with Kuzka in his arms, and he was laughing and crying all at once; he was kissing Kuzka and looking up at the hay-loft, and hadn't the heart to put the child down, and yet he was longing to go to his pigeons. He was always a soft sort of chap — sentimental. That day passed off very well, all quiet and proper. They had begun ringing the church bells for the evening service, when the thought struck me: 'To-morrow's Trinity Sunday; how is it they are not decking the gates and the fence with green? Something's wrong,' I thought. I went over to them. I peeped in, and there he was, sitting on the floor in the middle of the room, his eyes staring like a drunken man's, the tears streaming down his cheeks and his hands shaking; he was pulling cracknels, necklaces, gingerbread nuts, and all sorts of little presents out of his bundle and flinging them on the floor. Kuzka — he was three years old — was crawling on the floor, munching the gingerbreads, while Mashenka stood by the stove, white and shivering all over, muttering: 'I'm not your

I can't live with you,' and all sorts of foolish-
I bowed down at Vasya's feet, and said:
have sinned against you, Vassily Maximitch;
e us, for Christ's sake!' Then I got up and
to Mashenka: 'You, Marya Semyonovna,
now to wash Vassily Maximitch's feet and
the water. Do you be an obedient wife to him,
ray to God for me, that He in His mercy may
e my transgression.' It came to me like an
ation from an angel of Heaven; I gave her sol-
ounsel and spoke with such feeling that my own
flowed too. And so two days later Vasya
to me: 'Matyusha,' says he, 'I forgive you
y wife; God have mercy on you! She was a
r's wife, a young thing all alone; it was hard
r to be on her guard. She's not the first, nor

hook. 'Go to your husband,' I cried. 'Don't shame me before folks. Fear God!' And every day there was a scene of that sort.

"One morning I was standing in my yard near the stable cleaning a bridle. All at once I saw her running through the little gate into my yard, with bare feet, in her petticoat, and straight towards me; she clutched at the bridle, getting all smeared with the pitch, and shaking and weeping, she cried: 'I can't stand him; I loathe him; I can't bear it! If you don't love me, better kill me!' I was angry, and I struck her twice with the bridle, but at that instant Vasya ran in at the gate, and in a despairing voice he shouted: 'Don't beat her! Don't beat her!' But he ran up himself, and waving his arms, as though he were mad, he let fly with his fists at her with all his might, then flung her on the ground and kicked her. I tried to defend her, but he snatched up the reins and thrashed her with them, and all the while, like a colt's whinny, he went: 'He — he — he!'"

"I'd take the reins and let you feel them," muttered Varvara, moving away; "murdering our sister, the damned brutes! . . ."

"Hold your tongue, you jade!" Dyudya shouted at her.

"'He — he — he!'" Matvey Savitch went on. "A carrier ran out of his yard; I called to my workman, and the three of us got Mashenka away from him and carried her home in our arms. The disgrace of it! The same day I went over in the evening to see how things were. She was lying in bed,

rapped up in bandages, nothing but her eyes and
to be seen; she was looking at the ceiling. I
'Good-evening, Marya Semyonovna!' She
not speak. And Vasya was sitting in the next
n, his head in his hands, crying and saying:
ite that I am! I've ruined my life! O God,
ne die!' I sat for half an hour by Mashenka
gave her a good talking-to. I tried to frighten
a bit. 'The righteous,' said I, 'after this life
o Paradise, but you will go to a Gehenna of fire,
all adulteresses. Don't strive against your hus-
, go and lay yourself at his feet.' But never a
l from her; she didn't so much as blink an eyelid,
ll the world as though I were talking to a post.
next day Vasya fell ill with something like
era, and in the evening I heard that he was dead.

gun. She would not confess her guilt. Some in the court said she had poisoned her husband and others declared he had poisoned himself for grief. I was one of the witnesses. When they questioned me, I told the whole truth according to my oath. 'Hers,' said I, 'is the guilt. It's no good to conceal it; she did not love her husband, and she had a will of her own. . . .' The trial began in the morning and towards night they passed this sentence: to send her to hard labour in Siberia for thirteen years. After that sentence Mashenka remained three months longer in prison. I went to see her, and from Christian charity I took her a little tea and sugar. But as soon as she set eyes on me she began to shake all over, wringing her hands and muttering: 'Go away! go away!' And Kuzka she clasped to her as though she were afraid I would take him away. 'See,' said I, 'what you have come to! Ah, Masha, Masha! you would not listen to me when I gave you good advice, and now you must repent it. You are yourself to blame,' said I; 'blame yourself!' I was giving her good counsel, but she: 'Go away, go away!' huddling herself and Kuzka against the wall, and trembling all over.

"When they were taking her away to the chief town of our province, I walked by the escort as far as the station and slipped a rouble into her bundle for my soul's salvation. But she did not get as far as Siberia. . . . She fell sick of fever and died in prison."

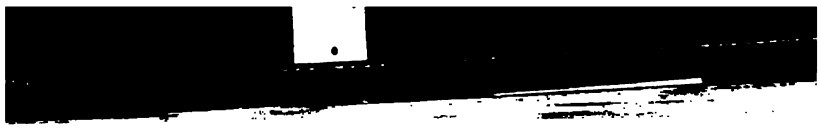
"Live like a dog and you must die a dog's death," said Dyudya.

Kuzka was sent back home. . . . I thought it
and took him to bring up. After all — though
ıvict's child — still he was a living soul, a Chris-
. . . I was sorry for him. I shall make him
lerk, and if I have no children of my own, I'll
e a merchant of him. Wherever I go now, I
him with me; let him learn his work."

ll the while Matvey Savitch had been telling his
, Kuzka had sat on a little stone near the gate.
head propped in both hands, he gazed at the
and in the distance he looked in the dark like
ımp of wood.

Kuzka, come to bed," Matvey Savitch bawled
ım.

Yes, it's time," said Dyudya, getting up; he
ıed loudly and added:



putting on his spectacles and standing in the corner with a book. He was a long while reading and crossing himself.

The travellers fell asleep. Afanasyevna and Sofya came up to the cart and began looking at Kuzka.

"The little orphan's asleep," said the old woman. "He's thin and frail, nothing but bones. No mother and no one to care for him properly."

"My Grishutka must be two years older," said Sofya. "Up at the factory he lives like a slave without his mother. The foreman beats him, I dare say. When I looked at this poor mite just now, I thought of my own Grishutka, and my heart went cold within me."

A minute passed in silence.

"Doesn't remember his mother, I suppose," said the old woman.

"How could he remember?"

And big tears began dropping from Sofya's eyes.

"He's curled himself up like a cat," she said, sobbing and laughing with tenderness and sorrow. . . . "Poor motherless mite!"

Kuzka started and opened his eyes. He saw before him an ugly, wrinkled, tear-stained face, and beside it another, aged and toothless, with a sharp chin and hooked nose, and high above them the infinite sky with the flying clouds and the moon. He cried out in fright, and Sofya, too, uttered a cry; both were answered by the echo, and a faint stir passed over the stifling air; a watchman tapped

where near, a dog barked. Matvey Savitch
ered something in his sleep and turned over on
other side.

ate at night when Dyudya and the old woman
the neighbouring watchman were all asleep,
a went out to the gate and sat down on the
h. She felt stifled and her head ached from
ing. The street was a wide and long one; it
ched for nearly two miles to the right and as far
e left, and the end of it was out of sight. The
n was now not over the yard, but behind the
ch. One side of the street was flooded with
nlight, while the other side lay in black shadow.
long shadows of the poplars and the starling-
stretched right across the street, while the
h cast a broad shadow, black and terrible that

"And if it were?"

It was Varvara. She stood still a minute, then came up to the bench and sat down.

"Where have you been?" asked Sofya.

Varvara made no answer.

"You'd better mind you don't get into trouble with such goings-on, my girl," said Sofya. "Did you hear how Mashenka was kicked and lashed with the reins? You'd better look out, or they'll treat you the same."

"Well, let them!"

Varvara laughed into her kerchief and whispered:

"I have just been with the priest's son."

"Nonsense!"

"I have!"

"It's a sin!" whispered Sofya.

"Well, let it be. . . . What do I care? If it's a sin, then it is a sin, but better be struck dead by thunder than live like this. I'm young and strong, and I've a filthy crooked hunchback for a husband, worse than Dyudya himself, curse him! When I was a girl, I hadn't bread to eat, or a shoe to my foot, and to get away from that wretchedness I was tempted by Alyoshka's money, and got caught like a fish in a net, and I'd rather have a viper for my bedfellow than that scurvy Alyoshka. And what's your life? It makes me sick to look at it. Your Fyodor sent you packing from the factory and he's taken up with another woman. They have robbed you of your boy and made a slave of him. You work like a horse, and never hear a kind word. I'd

er pine all my days an old maid, I'd rather get
a rouble from the priest's son, I'd rather beg
read, or throw myself into the well. . . ."
It's a sin!" whispered Sofya again.
Well, let it be."
mewhere behind the church the same three
s, two tenors and a bass, began singing again
urnful song. And again the words could not
stinguished.
They are not early to bed," Varvara said,
ning.
nd she began telling in a whisper of her mid-
walks with the priest's son, and of the stories
ad told her, and of his comrades, and of the fun
ad with the travellers who stayed in the house.
mournful song stirred a longing for life and

"I'd make away with my Alyoshka and never regret it."

"You talk nonsense; God forgive you."

When Sofya was just dropping asleep, Varvara, coming close, whispered in her ear:

"Let us get rid of Dyudya and Alyoshka!"

Sofya started and said nothing. Then she opened her eyes and gazed a long while steadily at the sky.

"People would find out," she said.

"No, they wouldn't. Dyudya's an old man, it's time he did die; and they'd say Alyoshka died of drink."

"I'm afraid . . . God would chastise us."

"Well, let Him. . . ."

Both lay awake thinking in silence.

"It's cold," said Sofya, beginning to shiver all over. "It will soon be morning. . . . Are you asleep?"

"No. . . . Don't you mind what I say, dear," whispered Varvara; "I get so mad with the damned brutes, I don't know what I do say. Go to sleep, or it will be daylight directly. . . . Go to sleep."

Both were quiet and soon they fell asleep.

Earlier than all woke the old woman. She waked up Sofya and they went together into the cowshed to milk the cows. The hunchback Alyoshka came in hopelessly drunk without his concertina; his breast and knees had been in the dust and straw — he must have fallen down in the road. Staggering, he went into the cowshed, and without undressing he rolled into a sledge and began to snore

at once. When first the crosses on the church and then the windows were flashing in the light of the rising sun, and shadows stretched across the yard over the dewy grass from the trees and the top of the well, Matvey Savitch jumped up and began hurrying about:

"Kuzka! get up!" he shouted. "It's time to put in the horses! Look sharp!"

The bustle of morning was beginning. A young Jewess in a brown gown with flounces led a horse into the yard to drink. The pulley of the well creaked plaintively, the bucket knocked as it went down. . . .

Kuzka, sleepy, tired, covered with dew, sat up in the cart, lazily putting on his little overcoat, and listening to the drip of the water from the bucket into the well as he shivered with the cold.

"Auntie!" shouted Matvey Savitch to Sofya, "tell my lad to hurry up and to harness the horses!"

And Dyudya at the same instant shouted from the window:

"Sofya, take a farthing from the Jewess for the horse's drink! They're always in here, the mangy creatures!"

In the street sheep were running up and down, baaing; the peasant women were shouting at the shepherd, while he played his pipes, cracked his whip, or answered them in a thick sleepy bass. Three sheep strayed into the yard, and not finding the gate again, pushed at the fence.

Varvara was waked by the noise, and bundling her bedding up in her arms, she went into the house.

"You might at least drive the sheep out!" the old woman bawled after her, "my lady!"

"I dare say! As if I were going to slave for you Herods!" muttered Varvara, going into the house. .

Dyudya came out of the house with his accounts in his hands, sat down on the step, and began reckoning how much the traveller owed him for the night's lodging, oats, and watering his horses.

"You charge pretty heavily for the oats, my good man," said Matvey Savitch.

"If it's too much, don't take them. There's no compulsion, merchant."

When the travellers were ready to start, they were detained for a minute. Kuzka had lost his cap.

"Little swine, where did you put it?" Matvey Savitch roared angrily. "Where is it?"

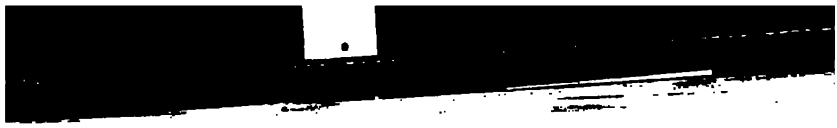
Kuzka's face was working with terror; he ran up and down near the cart, and not finding it there, ran to the gate and then to the shed. The old woman and Sofya helped him look.

"I'll pull your ears off!" yelled Matvey Savitch. "Dirty brat!"

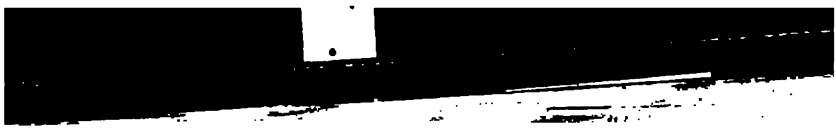
The cap was found at the bottom of the cart.

Kuzka brushed the hay off it with his sleeve, put it on, and timidly he crawled into the cart, still with an expression of terror on his face as though he were afraid of a blow from behind.

Matvey Savitch crossed himself. The driver gave a tug at the reins and the cart rolled out of the yard.



THE POST



THE POST

It was three o'clock in the night. The postman, ready to set off, in his cap and his coat, with a rusty sword in his hand, was standing near the door, waiting for the driver to finish putting the mail bags into the cart which had just been brought round with three horses. The sleepy postmaster sat at his table, which was like a counter; he was filling up a form and saying:

"My nephew, the student, wants to go to the station at once. So look here, Ignatyev, let him get into the mail cart and take him with you to the station: though it is against the regulations to take people with the mail, what's one to do? It's better for him to drive with you free than for me to hire horses for him."

"Ready!" they heard a shout from the yard.

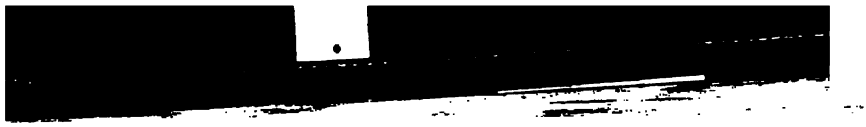
"Well, go then, and God be with you," said the postmaster. "Which driver is going?"

"Semyon Glazov."

"Come, sign the receipt."

The postman signed the receipt and went out. At the entrance of the post-office there was the dark outline of a cart and three horses. The horses were standing still except that one of the tracehorses kept uneasily shifting from one leg to the other and tossing its head, making the bell clang from time to

The cart with the mail bags looked like a
of darkness. Two silhouettes were moving
beside it: the student with a portmanteau in
and and a driver. The latter was smoking a
pipe; the light of the pipe moved about in
arkness, dying away and flaring up again; for
stant it lighted up a bit of a sleeve, then a
gy moustache and big copper-red nose, then
looking, overhanging eyebrows. The postman
ed down the mail bags with his hands, laid his
d on them and jumped into the cart. The stu-
clambered irresolutely in after him, and acci-
lly touching him with his elbow, said timidly
olitely: "I beg your pardon."
e pipe went out. The postmaster came out
post-office just as he was, in his waistcoat and



rumbled with a hollow sound along the dusty road. The little town was asleep. Houses and trees stood black on each side of the broad street, and not a light was to be seen. Narrow clouds stretched here and there over the star-spangled sky, and where the dawn would soon be coming there was a narrow crescent moon; but neither the stars, of which there were many, nor the half-moon, which looked white, lighted up the night air. It was cold and damp, and there was a smell of autumn.

The student, who thought that politeness required him to talk affably to a man who had not refused to let him accompany him, began:

"In summer it would be light at this time, but now there is not even a sign of the dawn. Summer is over!"

The student looked at the sky and went on:

"Even from the sky one can see that it is autumn. Look to the right. Do you see three stars side by side in a straight line? That is the constellation of Orion, which, in our hemisphere, only becomes visible in September."

The postman, thrusting his hands into his sleeves and retreating up to his ears into his coat collar, did not stir and did not glance at the sky. Apparently the constellation of Orion did not interest him. He was accustomed to see the stars, and probably he had long grown weary of them. The student paused for a while and then said:

"It's cold! It's time for the dawn to begin. Do you know what time the sun rises?"

"What?"

"What time does the sun rise now?"

"Between five and six," said the driver.

The mail cart drove out of the town. Now nothing could be seen on either side of the road but the fences of kitchen gardens and here and there a solitary willow-tree; everything in front of them was shrouded in darkness. Here in the open country the half-moon looked bigger and the stars shone more brightly. Then came a scent of dampness; the postman shrank further into his collar, the student felt an unpleasant chill first creeping about his feet, then over the mail bags, over his hands and his face. The horses moved more slowly; the bell was mute as though it were frozen. There was the sound of the splash of water, and stars reflected in the water danced under the horses' feet and round the wheels.

But ten minutes later it became so dark that neither the stars nor the moon could be seen. The mail cart had entered the forest. Prickly pine branches were continually hitting the student on his cap and a spider's web settled on his face. Wheels and hoofs knocked against huge roots, and the mail cart swayed from side to side as though it were drunk.

"Keep to the road," said the postman angrily. "Why do you run up the edge? My face is scratched all over by the twigs! Keep more to the right!"

But at that point there was nearly an accident. The cart suddenly bounded as though in the throes of a convulsion, began trembling, and, with a creak, lurched heavily first to the right and then to the left,

and at a fearful pace dashed along the forest track. The horses had taken fright at something and bolted.

"Wo! wo!" the driver cried in alarm. "Wo . . . you devils!"

The student, violently shaken, bent forward and tried to find something to catch hold of so as to keep his balance and save himself from being thrown out, but the leather mail bags were slippery, and the driver, whose belt the student tried to catch at, was himself tossed up and down and seemed every moment on the point of flying out. Through the rattle of the wheels and the creaking of the cart they heard the sword fall with a clank on the ground, then a little later something fell with two heavy thuds behind the mail cart.

"Wo!" the driver cried in a piercing voice, bending backwards. "Stop!"

The student fell on his face and bruised his forehead against the driver's seat, but was at once tossed back again and knocked his spine violently against the back of the cart.

"I am falling!" was the thought that flashed through his mind, but at that instant the horses dashed out of the forest into the open, turned sharply to the right, and rumbling over a bridge of logs, suddenly stopped dead, and the suddenness of this halt flung the student forward again.

The driver and the student were both breathless. The postman was not in the cart. He had been thrown out, together with his sword, the student's portmanteau, and one of the mail bags.

op, you rascal! Sto-op!" they heard him from the forest. "You damned black- " he shouted, running up to the cart, and as a note of pain and fury in his tearful voice. anathema, plague take you!" he roared, g up to the driver and shaking his fist at him. hat a to-do! Lord have mercy on us!" mut- he driver in a conscience-stricken voice, setting omething in the harness at the horses' heads. all that devil of a tracehorse. Cursed filly; ly a week since she has run in harness. She ll right, but as soon as we go down hill there ble! She wants a touch or two on the nose, he wouldn't play about like this. . . . Stea- Damn!"

le the driver was setting the horses to rights

tice you had been thrown out. I can fancy what it is like driving in autumn!"

The postman did not speak.

"Have you been going with the post for long?" the student asked.

"Eleven years."

"Oho; every day?"

"Yes, every day. I take this post and drive back again at once. Why?"

Making the journey every day, he must have had a good many interesting adventures in eleven years. On bright summer and gloomy autumn nights, or in winter when a ferocious snowstorm whirled howling round the mail cart, it must have been hard to avoid feeling frightened and uncanny. No doubt more than once the horses had bolted, the mail cart had stuck in the mud, they had been attacked by highwaymen, or had lost their way in the blizzard. . . .

"I can fancy what adventures you must have had in eleven years!" said the student. "I expect it must be terrible driving?"

He said this and expected that the postman would tell him something, but the latter preserved a sullen silence and retreated into his collar. Meanwhile it began to get light. The sky changed colour imperceptibly; it still seemed dark, but by now the horses and the driver and the road could be seen. The crescent moon looked bigger and bigger, and the cloud that stretched below it, shaped like a cannon in a gun-carriage, showed a faint yellow on its lower

edge. Soon the postman's face was visible. It was wet with dew, grey and rigid as the face of a corpse. An expression of dull, sullen anger was set upon it, as though the postman were still in pain and still angry with the driver.

"Thank God it is daylight!" said the student, looking at his chilled and angry face. "I am quite frozen. The nights are cold in September, but as soon as the sun rises it isn't cold. Shall we soon reach the station?"

The postman frowned and made a wry face.

"How fond you are of talking, upon my word!" he said. "Can't you keep quiet when you are travelling?"

The student was confused, and did not approach him again all the journey. The morning came on rapidly. The moon turned pale and melted away into the dull grey sky, the cloud turned yellow all over, the stars grew dim, but the east was still cold-looking and the same colour as the rest of the sky, so that one could hardly believe the sun was hidden in it.

The chill of the morning and the surliness of the postman gradually infected the student. He looked apathetically at the country around him, waited for the warmth of the sun, and thought of nothing but how dreadful and horrible it must be for the poor trees and the grass to endure the cold nights. The sun rose dim, drowsy, and cold. The tree-tops were not gilded by the rays of the rising sun, as usually described, the sunbeams did not creep over the earth and there was no sign of joy in the flight of the

sleepy birds. The cold remained just the same now that the sun was up as it had been in the night.

The student looked drowsily and ill-humouredly at the curtained windows of a mansion by which the mail cart drove. Behind those windows, he thought, people were most likely enjoying their soundest morning sleep not hearing the bells, nor feeling the cold, nor seeing the postman's angry face; and if the bell did wake some young lady, she would turn over on the other side, smile in the fulness of her warmth and comfort, and, drawing up her feet and putting her hand under her cheek, would go off to sleep more soundly than ever.

The student looked at the pond which gleamed near the house and thought of the carp and the pike which find it possible to live in cold water. . . .

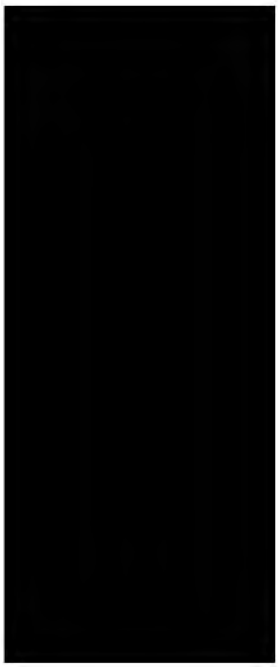
"It's against the regulations to take anyone with the post. . . ." the postman said unexpectedly. "It's not allowed! And since it is not allowed, people have no business . . . to get in. . . . Yes. It makes no difference to me, it's true, only I don't like it, and I don't wish it."

"Why didn't you say so before, if you don't like it?"

The postman made no answer but still had an unfriendly, angry expression. When, a little later, the horses stopped at the entrance of the station the student thanked him and got out of the cart. The mail train had not yet come in. A long goods train stood in a siding; in the tender the engine driver and his assistant, with faces wet with dew, were drinking tea from a dirty tin teapot. The carriages, the

rms, the seats were all wet and cold. Until
ain came in the student stood at the buffet
ng tea while the postman, with his hands thrust
sleeves and the same look of anger still on
ce, paced up and down the platform in soli-
staring at the ground under his feet.
th whom was he angry? Was it with people,
overty, with the autmn nights?

THE NEW VILLA



THE NEW VILLA

I

Two miles from the village of Obrutchanovo a huge bridge was being built. From the village, which stood up high on the steep river-bank, its trellis-like skeleton could be seen, and in foggy weather and on still winter days, when its delicate iron girders and all the scaffolding around was covered with hoar frost, it presented a picturesque and even fantastic spectacle. Kutcherov, the engineer who was building the bridge, a stout, broad-shouldered, bearded man in a soft crumpled cap drove through the village in his racing droshky or his open carriage. Now and then on holidays navvies working on the bridge would come to the village; they begged for alms, laughed at the women, and sometimes carried off something. But that was rare; as a rule the days passed quietly and peacefully as though no bridge-building were going on, and only in the evening, when camp fires gleamed near the bridge, the wind faintly wafted the songs of the navvies. And by day there was sometimes the mournful clang of metal, don-don-don.

It happened that the engineer's wife came to see him. She was pleased with the river-banks and the gorgeous view over the green valley with trees,

flagstaff on which a fla
built it in about three n
they were planting big
and everything began t
avenues to the new
labourers in white aprc
was a little fountain,
flashed so brilliantly tl
The house had already

On a bright, warm
two horses were broug
lage blacksmith, Rodic
the New Villa. The
beasts, as white as sno

"Perfect swans!"
with reverent admirat

His wife Stepanida,
dren came out into the
degrees a crowd collec
and son, both men wi
beardless, came up bar

"It's only that they are white; what is there in them?" he said. "Put mine on oats, and they will be just as sleek. They ought to be in a plough and with a whip, too. . . ."

The coachman simply looked at him with disdain, but did not utter a word. And afterwards, while they were blowing up the fire at the forge, the coachman talked while he smoked cigarettes. The peasants learned from him various details: his employers were wealthy people; his mistress, Elena Ivanovna, had till her marriage lived in Moscow in a poor way as a governess; she was kind-hearted, compassionate, and fond of helping the poor. On the new estate, he told them, they were not going to plough or to sow, but simply to live for their pleasure, live only to breathe the fresh air. When he had finished and led the horses back a crowd of boys followed him, the dogs barked, and Kozov, looking after him, winked sarcastically.

"Landowners, too-oo!" he said. "They have built a house and set up horses, but I bet they are nobodies — landowners, too-oo."

Kozov for some reason took a dislike from the first to the new house, to the white horses, and to the handsome, well-fed coachman. Kozov was a solitary man, a widower; he had a dreary life (he was prevented from working by a disease which he sometimes called a rupture and sometimes worms); he was maintained by his son, who worked at a confectioner's in Harkov and sent him money; and from early morning till evening he sauntered at leisure about the river or about the village; if he saw, for

nce, a peasant carting a log, or fishing, he would "That log's dry wood — it is rotten," or, ey won't bite in weather like this." In times rought he would declare that there would not be op of rain till the frost came; and when the rains he would say that everything would rot in the , that everything was ruined. And as he said things he would wink as though he knew thing.

the New Villa they burned Bengal lights and up fireworks in the evenings, and a sailing-boat red lanterns floated by Obrutchanovo. One ning the engineer's wife, Elena Ivanovna, and ittle daughter drove to the village in a carriage yellow wheels and a pair of dark bay ponies; mother and daughter were wearing broad-

she looked at the carriage facing the sun, and her face smiled and wrinkled up as though she were blind.

"This is for your children," said Elena Ivanovna, and she gave her three roubles.

Stepanida suddenly burst into tears and bowed down to the ground. Rodion, too, flopped to the ground, displaying his brownish bald head, and as he did so he almost caught his wife in the ribs with the fork. Elena Ivanovna was overcome with confusion and drove back.

II

The Lytchkovs, father and son, caught in their meadows two cart-horses, a pony, and a broad-faced Aalhaus bull-calf, and with the help of red-headed Volodka, son of the blacksmith Rodion, drove them to the village. They called the village elder, collected witnesses, and went to look at the damage.

"All right, let 'em!" said Kozov, winking, "le-et 'em! Let them get out of it if they can, the engineers! Do you think there is no such thing as law? All right! Send for the police inspector, draw up a statement! . . ."

"Draw up a statement," repeated Volodka.

"I don't want to let this pass!" shouted the younger Lytchkov. He shouted louder and louder, and his beardless face seemed to be more and more swollen. "They've set up a nice fashion! Leave them free, and they will ruin all the meadows! You've no sort of right to ill-treat people! We are not serfs now!"

Ve are not serfs now!" repeated Volodka.
Ve got on all right without a bridge," said the
Lytchkov gloomily; "we did not ask for it.
do we want a bridge for? We don't want

Brothers, good Christians, we cannot leave it
his!"
All right, let 'em!" said Kozov, winking.
them get out of it if they can! Landowners,
d!"
ey went back to the village, and as they walked
ounger Lytchkov beat himself on the breast
his fist and shouted all the way, and Volodka
ed, too, repeating his words. And meanwhile
a crowd had gathered in the village round the
ughbred bull-calf and the horses. The bull-

younger Lytchkov could be heard from the village. Their women were uneasy and did not sleep all night. Rodion did not sleep either.

"It's a bad business," he said, sighing and turning from side to side. "The gentleman will be angry, and then there will be trouble. . . . They have insulted the gentleman. . . . Oh, they've insulted him. It's a bad business. . . ."

It happened that the peasants, Rodion amongst them, went into their forest to divide the clearings for mowing, and as they were returning home they were met by the engineer. He was wearing a red cotton shirt and high boots; a setter dog with its long tongue hanging out, followed behind him.

"Good-day, brothers," he said.

The peasants stopped and took off their hats.

"I have long wanted to have a talk with you, friends," he went on. "This is what it is. Ever since the early spring your cattle have been in my copse and garden every day. Everything is trampled down; the pigs have rooted up the meadow, are ruining everything in the kitchen garden, and all the undergrowth in the copse is destroyed. There is no getting on with your herdsmen; one asks them civilly, and they are rude. Damage is done on my estate every day and I do nothing — I don't fine you or make a complaint; meanwhile you impounded my horses and my bull calf and exacted five roubles. Was that right? Is that neighbourly?" he went on, and his face was so soft and persuasive, and his expression was not forbidding. "Is that the way decent people be-

? A week ago one of your people cut down
oak saplings in my copse. You have dug up
oad to Eresnevo, and now I have to go two
round. Why do you injure me at every step?
t harm have I done you? For God's sake, tell
My wife and I do our utmost to live with you
ace and harmony; we help the peasants as we
My wife is a kind, warm-hearted woman; she
refuses you help. That is her dream — to be
se to you and your children. You reward us
evil for our good. You are unjust, my friends.
k of that. I ask you earnestly to think it over.
reat you humanely; repay us in the same coin."
e turned and went away. The peasants stood
le longer, put on their caps and walked away.
on, who always understood everything that was
to him in some peculiar way of his own, heaved

hard to distinguish which were Rodion's and which were Volodka's. Volodka's wife, Lukerya, a plain young woman with prominent eyes and a nose like the beak of a bird, was kneading dough in a tub; Volodka was sitting on the stove with his legs hanging.

"On the road near Nikita's buckwheat . . . the engineer with his dog . . ." Rodion began, after a rest, scratching his ribs and his elbow. "'You must pay,' says he . . . 'coin,' says he. . . . Coin or no coin, we shall have to collect ten kopecks from every hut. We've offended the gentleman very much. I am sorry for him. . . ."

"We've lived without a bridge," said Volodka, not looking at anyone, "and we don't want one."

"What next; the bridge is a government business."

"We don't want it."

"Your opinion is not asked. What is it to you?"

"'Your opinion is not asked,'" Volodka mimicked him. "We don't want to drive anywhere; what do we want with a bridge? If we have to, we can cross by the boat."

Someone from the yard outside knocked at the window so violently that it seemed to shake the whole hut.

"Is Volodka at home?" he heard the voice of the younger Lytchkov. "Volodka, come out, come along."

Volodka jumped down off the stove and began looking for his cap.

Don't go, Volodka," said Rodion diffidently. n't go with them, son. You are foolish, like le child; they will teach you no good; don't

Don't go, son," said Stepanida, and she blinked nough about to shed tears. " I bet they are g you to the tavern."

' To the tavern,' " Volodka mimicked.

You'll come back drunk again, you currish od," said Lukerya, looking at him angrily. along, go along, and may you burn up with a, you tailless Satan!"

You hold your tongue," shouted Volodka.

They've married me to a fool, they've ruined a luckless orphan, you red-headed drunkard " wailed Lukerya, wiping her face with a hand

"The Kutcherov lady has come! The Kutcherov lady!"

"Good-morning," said Elena Ivanovna, and she stopped; she paused, and then asked: "Well, how are you getting on?"

"We get along all right, thank God," answered Rodion, speaking rapidly. "To be sure we get along."

"The life we lead!" smiled Stepanida. "You can see our poverty yourself, dear lady! The family is fourteen souls in all, and only two bread-winners. We are supposed to be blacksmiths, but when they bring us a horse to shoe we have no coal, nothing to buy it with. We are worried to death, lady," she went on, and laughed. "Oh, oh, we are worried to death."

Elena Ivanovna sat down at the entrance and, putting her arm round her little girl, pondered something, and judging from the little girl's expression, melancholy thoughts were straying through her mind, too; as she brooded she played with the sumptuous lace on the parasol she had taken out of her mother's hands.

"Poverty," said Rodion, "a great deal of anxiety — you see no end to it. Here, God sends no rain . . . our life is not easy, there is no denying it."

"You have a hard time in this life," said Elena Ivanovna, "but in the other world you will be happy."

Rodion did not understand her, and simply coughed into his clenched hand by way of reply. Stepanida said:

Dear lady, the rich men will be all right in the
world, too. The rich put up candles, pay for
ces; the rich give to beggars, but what can the
man do? He has no time to make the sign of
ross. He is the beggar of beggars himself;
can he think of his soul? And many sins come
poverty; from trouble we snarl at one another
dogs, we haven't a good word to say to one
her, and all sorts of things happen, dear lady —
forbid! It seems we have no luck in this
d nor the next. All the luck has fallen to the
"

e spoke gaily; she was evidently used to talking
r hard life. And Rodion smiled, too; he was
ed that his old woman was so clever, so ready
eech.

father was a simple peasant, my father was a tradesman in Moscow; he was a plain, uneducated man, too, while my husband's parents were wealthy and distinguished. They did not want him to marry me, but he disobeyed them, quarrelled with them, and they have not forgiven us to this day. That worries my husband; it troubles him and keeps him in constant agitation; he loves his mother, loves her dearly. So I am uneasy, too, my soul is in pain."

Peasants, men and women, were by now standing round Rodion's hut and listening. Kozov came up, too, and stood twitching his long, narrow beard. The Lytchkovs, father and son, drew near.

"And say what you like, one cannot be happy and satisfied if one does not feel in one's proper place." Elena Ivanovna went on. "Each of you has his strip of land, each of you works and knows what he is working for; my husband builds bridges — in short, everyone has his place, while I, I simply walk about. I have not my bit to work. I don't work, and feel as though I were an outsider. I am saying all this that you may not judge from outward appearances; if a man is expensively dressed and has means it does not prove that he is satisfied with his life."

She got up to go away and took her daughter by the hand.

"I like your place here very much," she said, and smiled, and from that faint, diffident smile one could tell how unwell she really was, how young and how pretty; she had a pale, thinnish face with dark eyebrows and fair hair. And the little girl was just

another as her mother: thin, fair, and slender.
e was a fragrance of scent about them.
I like the river and the forest and the village,"
a Ivanovna went on; "I could live here all my
and I feel as though here I should get strong
ind my place. I want to help you — I want to
lfully — to be of use, to be a real friend to you.
w your need, and what I don't know I feel, my
guesses. I am sick, feeble, and for me per-
it is not possible to change my life as I would.
I have children. I will try to bring them up
they may be of use to you, may love you. I
impress upon them continually that their life
not belong to them, but to you. Only I beg you
stly, I beseech you, trust us, live in friendship
us. My husband is a kind, good man. Don't

Lytchkov the father, looking at the ground; "you are educated people; it is for you to know best. Only, you see, Voronov, a rich peasant at Eresnevo, promised to build a school; he, too, said, 'I will do this for you,' 'I will do that for you,' and he only put up the framework and refused to go on. And then they made the peasants put the roof on and finish it; it cost them a thousand roubles. Voronov did not care; he only stroked his beard, but the peasants felt it a bit hard."

"That was a crow, but now there's a rook, too," said Kozov, and he winked.

There was the sound of laughter.

"We don't want a school," said Volodka sullenly. "Our children go to Petrovskoe, and they can go on going there; we don't want it."

Elena Ivanovna seemed suddenly intimidated; her face looked paler and thinner, she shrank into herself as though she had been touched with something coarse, and walked away without uttering another word. And she walked more and more quickly, without looking round.

"Lady," said Rodion, walking after her, "lady, wait a bit; hear what I would say to you."

He followed her without his cap, and spoke softly as though begging.

"Lady, wait and hear what I will say to you."

They had walked out of the village, and Elena Ivanovna stopped beside a cart in the shade of an old mountain ash.

"Don't be offended, lady," said Rodion. "What does it mean? Have patience. Have pa-

e for a couple of years. You will live here, you have patience, and it will all come round. Our are good and peaceable; there's no harm in ; it's God's truth I'm telling you. Don't mind ov and the Lytchkovs, and don't mind Volodka. a fool; he listens to the first that speaks. The s are quiet folks; they are silent. Some would ad, you know, to say a word from the heart and and up for themselves, but cannot. They have art and a conscience, but no tongue. Don't be ded . . . have patience. . . . What does it er?"

ena Ivanovna looked at the broad, tranquil , pondering, and tears flowed down her cheeks. Rodion was troubled by those tears; he almost himself.

"Where?"

"To Moscow. . . . Let us go, mamma."

The child began crying.

Rodion was utterly overcome; his face broke into profuse perspiration; he took out of his pocket a little crooked cucumber, like a half-moon, covered with crumbs of rye bread, and began thrusting it into the little girl's hands.

"Come, come," he muttered, scowling severely; "take the little cucumber, eat it up. . . . You mustn't cry. Mamma will whip you. . . . She'll tell your father of you when you get home. Come, come. . . ."

They walked on, and he still followed behind them, wanting to say something friendly and persuasive to them. And seeing that they were both absorbed in their own thoughts and their own griefs, and not noticing him, he stopped and, shading his eyes from the sun, looked after them for a long time till they disappeared into their copse.

IV

The engineer seemed to grow irritable and petty, and in every trivial incident saw an act of robbery or outrage. His gate was kept bolted even by day, and at night two watchmen walked up and down the garden beating a board; and they gave up employing anyone from Obrutchanovo as a labourer. As ill-luck would have it someone (either a peasant or one of the workmen) took the new wheels off the cart and replaced them by old ones, then soon after-

s two bridles and a pair of pincers were carried
nd murmurs arose even in the village. People
n to say that a search should be made at the
nkovs' and at Volodka's, and then the bridles
he pincers were found under the hedge in the
eer's garden; someone had thrown them down
.

happened that the peasants were coming in a
d out of the forest, and again they met the
eer on the road. He stopped, and without
ng them good-day he began, looking angrily
t one, then at another:

I have begged you not to gather mushrooms
e park and near the yard, but to leave them
ny wife and children, but your girls come be-
daybreak and there is not a mushroom left

. . . 'Why don't they bring mushrooms,' he said . . . 'to my wife and children?' he said. . . . And then he looked at me and he said: 'I and my wife will look after you,' he said. I wanted to fall down at his feet, but I hadn't the courage. . . . God give him health. . . . God bless him! . . ."

Stephania crossed herself and sighed.

"They are kind, simple-hearted people," Rodion went on. "'We shall look after you.' . . . He promised me that before everyone. In our old age . . . it wouldn't be a bad thing. . . . I should always pray for them. . . . Holy Mother, bless them. . . ."

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the fourteenth of September, was the festival of the village church. The Lytchkovs, father and son, went across the river early in the morning and returned to dinner drunk; they spent a long time going about the village, alternately singing and swearing; then they had a fight and went to the New Villa to complain. First Lytchkov the father went into the yard with a long ashen stick in his hands. He stopped irresolutely and took off his hat. Just at that moment the engineer and his family were sitting on the verandah, drinking tea.

"What do you want?" shouted the engineer.

"Your honour . . ." Lytchkov began, and burst into tears. "Show the Divine mercy, protect me . . . my son makes my life a misery . . . your honour. . . ."

Lytchkov the son walked up, too; he, too, was bareheaded and had a stick in his hand; he stopped

fixed his drunken senseless eyes on the
ndah.
It is not my business to settle your affairs," said
engineer. "Go to the rural captain or the
e officer."
I have been everywhere. . . . I have lodged a
ion . . ." said Lytchkov the father, and he
ed. "Where can I go now? He can kill me
it seems. He can do anything. Is that the
to treat a father? A father?"
e raised his stick and hit his son on the head;
son raised his stick and struck his father just
is bald patch such a blow that the stick bounced
. The father did not even flinch, but hit his
again and again on the head. And so they
l and kept hitting one another on the head, and

of rubble left from the building of it had long been overgrown with grass, the navvies were forgotten, and instead of the strains of the "Dubinushka" that they used to sing, the peasants heard almost every hour the sounds of a passing train.

The New Villa has long ago been sold; now it belongs to a government clerk who comes here from the town for the holidays with his family, drinks tea on the terrace, and then goes back to the town again. He wears a cockade on his cap; he talks and clears his throat as though he were a very important official, though he is only of the rank of a collegiate secretary, and when the peasants bow he makes no response.

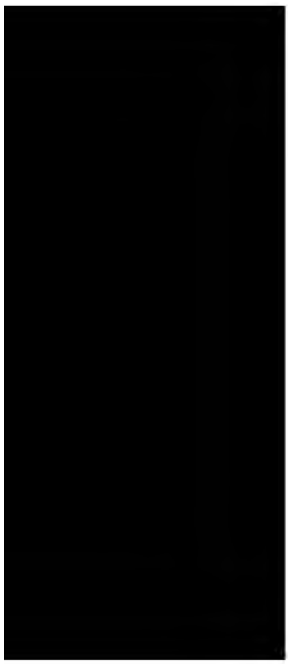
In Obrutchanovo everyone has grown older; Kozov is dead. In Rodion's hut there are even more children. Volodka has grown a long red beard. They are still as poor as ever.

In the early spring the Obrutchanovo peasants were sawing wood near the station. And after work they were going home; they walked without haste one after the other. Broad saws curved over their shoulders; the sun was reflected in them. The nightingales were singing in the bushes on the bank, larks were trilling in the heavens. It was quiet at the New Villa; there was not a soul there, and only golden pigeons — golden because the sunlight was streaming upon them — were flying over the house. All of them — Rodion, the two Lytchkovs, and Volodka — thought of the white horses, the little ponies, the fireworks, the boat with the lanterns; they remembered how the engineer's wife, so beauti-

nd so grandly dressed, had come into the vil-
and talked to them in such a friendly way.
it seemed as though all that had never been;
s like a dream or a fairy-tale.

ney trudged along, tired out, and mused as they
. . . In their village, they mused, the
le were good, quiet, sensible, fearing God, and
a Ivanovna, too, was quiet, kind, and gentle;
de one sad to look at her, but why had they
got on together? Why had they parted like
ies? How was it that some mist had shrouded
their eyes what mattered most, and had let
see nothing but damage done by cattle, bridles,
rs, and all those trivial things which now, as
remembered them, seemed so nonsensical?
was it that with the new owner they lived

DREAMS



DREAMS

Two peasant constables — one a stubby, black-bearded individual with such exceptionally short legs that if you looked at him from behind it seemed as though his legs began much lower down than in other people; the other, long, thin, and straight as a stick, with a scanty beard of dark reddish colour — were escorting to the district town a tramp who refused to remember his name. The first waddled along, looking from side to side, chewing now a straw, now his own sleeve, slapping himself on the haunches and humming, and altogether had a careless and frivolous air; the other, in spite of his lean face and narrow shoulders, looked solid, grave, and substantial; in the lines and expression of his whole figure he was like the priests among the Old Believers, or the warriors who are painted on old-fashioned ikons. "For his wisdom God had added to his forehead"— that is, he was bald — which increased the resemblance referred to. The first was called Andrey Ptaha, the second Nikandr Sapozhnikov.

The man they were escorting did not in the least correspond with the conception everyone has of a tramp. He was a frail little man, weak and sickly-looking, with small, colourless, and extremely indefinite features. His eyebrows were scanty, his ex-

pression mild and submissive; he had scarcely a trace of a moustache, though he was over thirty. He walked along timidly, bent forward, with his hands thrust into his sleeves. The collar of his shabby cloth overcoat, which did not look like a peasant's, was turned up to the very brim of his cap, so that only his little red nose ventured to peep out into the light of day. He spoke in an ingratiating tenor, continually coughing. It was very, very difficult to believe that he was a tramp concealing his surname. He was more like an unsuccessful priest's son, stricken by God and reduced to beggary; a clerk discharged for drunkenness; a merchant's son or nephew who had tried his feeble powers in a theatrical career, and was now going home to play the last act in the parable of the prodigal son; perhaps, judging by the dull patience with which he struggled with the hopeless autumn mud, he might have been a fanatical monk, wandering from one Russian monastery to another, continually seeking "a peaceful life, free from sin," and not finding it. . . .

The travellers had been a long while on their way, but they seemed to be always on the same small patch of ground. In front of them there stretched thirty feet of muddy black-brown mud, behind them the same, and wherever one looked further, an impenetrable wall of white fog. They went on and on, but the ground remained the same, the wall was no nearer, and the patch on which they walked seemed still the same patch. They got a glimpse of a white, clumsy-looking stone, a

small ravine, or a bundle of hay dropped by a passer-by, the brief glimmer of a great muddy puddle, or, suddenly, a shadow with vague outlines would come into view ahead of them; the nearer they got to it the smaller and darker it became; nearer still, and there stood up before the wayfarers a slanting milestone with the number rubbed off, or a wretched birch-tree drenched and bare like a wayside beggar. The birch-tree would whisper something with what remained of its yellow leaves, one leaf would break off and float lazily to the ground. . . . And then again fog, mud, the brown grass at the edges of the road. On the grass hung dingy, unfriendly tears. They were not the tears of soft joy such as the earth weeps at welcoming the summer sun and parting from it, and such as she gives to drink at dawn to the corncrakes, quails, and graceful, long-beaked crested snipes. The travellers' feet stuck in the heavy, clinging mud. Every step cost an effort.

Andrey Ptaha was somewhat excited. He kept looking round at the tramp and trying to understand how a live, sober man could fail to remember his name.

"You are an orthodox Christian, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yes," the tramp answered mildly.

"H'm . . . then you've been christened?"

"Why, to be sure! I'm not a Turk. I go to church and to the sacrament, and do not eat meat when it is forbidden. And I observe my religious duties punctually. . . ."

"Well, what are you called, then?"

"Call me what you like, good man."

Ptaha shrugged his shoulders and slapped himself on the haunches in extreme perplexity. The other constable, Nikandr Sapozhnikov, maintained a staid silence. He was not so naïve as Ptaha, and apparently knew very well the reasons which might induce an orthodox Christian to conceal his name from other people. His expressive face was cold and stern. He walked apart and did not condescend to idle chatter with his companions, but, as it were, tried to show everyone, even the fog, his sedateness and discretion.

"God knows what to make of you," Ptaha persisted in addressing the tramp. "Peasant you are not, and gentleman you are not, but some sort of a thing between. . . . The other day I was washing a sieve in the pond and caught a reptile — see, as long as a finger, with gills and a tail. The first minute I thought it was a fish, then I looked — and, blow it! if it hadn't paws. It was not a fish, it was a viper, and the deuce only knows what it was. . . . So that's like you. . . . What's your calling?"

"I am a peasant and of peasant family," sighed the tramp. "My mamma was a house serf. I don't look like a peasant, that's true, for such has been my lot, good man. My mamma was a nurse with the gentry, and had every comfort, and as I was of her flesh and blood, I lived with her in the master's house. She petted and spoiled me, and did her best to take me out of my humble class and make a gentleman of me. I slept in a bed, every

day I ate a real dinner, I wore breeches and shoes like a gentleman's child. What my mamma ate I was fed on, too; they gave her stuffs as a present, and she dressed me up in them. . . . We lived well! I ate so many sweets and cakes in my childish years that if they could be sold now it would be enough to buy a good horse. Mamma taught me to read and write, she instilled the fear of God in me from my earliest years, and she so trained me that now I can't bring myself to utter an unrefined peasant word. And I don't drink vodka, my lad, and am neat in my dress, and know how to behave with decorum in good society. If she is still living, God give her health; and if she is dead, then, O Lord, give her soul peace in Thy Kingdom, wherein the just are at rest."

The tramp bared his head with the scanty hair standing up like a brush on it, turned his eyes upward and crossed himself twice.

"Grant her, O Lord, a verdant and peaceful resting-place," he said in a drawling voice, more like an old woman's than a man's. "Teach Thy servant Xenia Thy justifications, O Lord! If it had not been for my beloved mamma I should have been a peasant with no sort of understanding! Now, young man, ask me about anything and I understand it all: the holy Scriptures and profane writings, and every prayer and catechism. I live according to the Scriptures. . . . I don't injure anyone, I keep my flesh in purity and continence, I observe the fasts, I eat at fitting times. Another man will take no pleasure in anything but vodka and lewd

but when I have time I sit in a corner and read
ok. I read and I weep and weep. . . ."
What do you weep for?"
They write so pathetically! For some books
gives but a five-kopeck piece, and yet one weeps
ighs exceedingly over it."
s your father dead?" asked Ptaha.
don't know, good man. I don't know my
t; it is no use concealing it. I judge that I
mamma's illegitimate son. My mamma lived
er life with the gentry, and did not want to
y a simple peasant. . . ."
And so she fell into the master's hands,"
ed Ptaha.
She did transgress, that's true. She was pious,
fearing, but she did not keep her maiden purity.

"Who has any need to know my name?" sighed the tramp, leaning his cheek on his fist. "And what advantage would it be to me if they did know it? If I were allowed to go where I would — but it would only make things worse. I know the law, Christian brothers. Now I am a tramp who doesn't remember his name, and it's the very most if they send me to Eastern Siberia and give me thirty or forty lashes; but if I were to tell them my real name and description they would send me back to hard labour, I know!"

"Why, have you been a convict?"

"I have, dear friend. For four years I went about with my head shaved and fetters on my legs."

"What for?"

"For murder, my good man! When I was still a boy of eighteen or so, my mamma accidentally poured arsenic instead of soda and acid into my master's glass. There were boxes of all sorts in the storeroom, numbers of them; it was easy to make a mistake over them."

The tramp sighed, shook his head, and said:

"She was a pious woman, but, who knows? another man's soul is a slumbering forest! It may have been an accident, or maybe she could not endure the affront of seeing the master prefer another servant. . . . Perhaps she put it in on purpose, God knows! I was young then, and did not understand it all . . . now I remember that our master had taken another mistress and mamma was greatly disturbed. Our trial lasted nearly two years. . . .

mma was condemned to penal servitude for
ty years, and I, on account of my youth, only to
."
And why were you sentenced?"
As an accomplice. I handed the glass to the
er. That was always the custom. Mamma
ared the soda and I handed it to him. Only
you all this as a Christian, brothers, as I would
t before God. Don't you tell anybody. . . ."
Oh, nobody's going to ask us," said Ptaha.
you've run away from prison, have you?"
I have, dear friend. Fourteen of us ran away.
folks, God bless them! ran away and took
with them. Now you tell me, on your con-
ce, good man, what reason have I to disclose
ame? They will send me back to penal servi-

from it! You are a robber and treated like a robber — worse than any dog. You can't sleep, you can't eat or even say your prayers. But it's not like that in a settlement. In a settlement I shall be a member of a commune like other people. The authorities are bound by law to give me my share . . . ye-es! They say the land costs nothing, no more than snow; you can take what you like! They will give me corn land and building land and garden. . . . I shall plough my fields like other people, sow seed. I shall have cattle and stock of all sorts, bees, sheep, and dogs. . . . A Siberian cat, that rats and mice may not devour my goods. . . . I will put up a house, I shall buy ikons. . . . Please God, I'll get married, I shall have children. . . ."

The tramp muttered and looked, not at his listeners, but away into the distance. Naïve as his dreams were, they were uttered in such a genuine and heartfelt tone that it was difficult not to believe in them. The tramp's little mouth was screwed up in a smile. His eyes and little nose and his whole face were fixed and blank with blissful anticipation of happiness in the distant future. The constables listened and looked at him gravely, not without sympathy. They, too, believed in his dreams.

"I am not afraid of Siberia," the tramp went on muttering. "Siberia is just as much Russia and has the same God and Tsar as here. They are just as orthodox Christians as you and I. Only there is more freedom there and people are better off. Everything is better there. Take the rivers there, for instance; they are far better than those here.

e's no end of fish; and all sorts of wild fowl. my greatest pleasure, brothers, is fishing. me no bread to eat, but let me sit with a fish- . Yes, indeed! I fish with a hook and with re line, and set creels, and when the ice comes tch with a net. I am not strong to draw up net, so I shall hire a man for five kopecks. Lord, what a pleasure it is! You catch an out or a roach of some sort and are as pleased ough you had met your own brother. And d you believe it, there's a special art for every you catch one with a live bait, you catch an- with a grub, the third with a frog or a grass- er. One has to understand all that, of course! example, take the eel-pout. It is not a delicate — it will take a perch; and a pike loves a

forests on the bank. The trees are so tall that if you look to the top it makes you dizzy. Every pine would be worth ten roubles by the prices here."

In the overwhelming rush of his fancies, of artistic images of the past and sweet presentiments of happiness in the future, the poor wretch sank into silence, merely moving his lips as though whispering to himself. The vacant, blissful smile never left his lips. The constables were silent. They were pondering with bent heads. In the autumn stillness, when the cold, sullen mist that rises from the earth lies like a weight on the heart, when it stands like a prison wall before the eyes, and reminds man of the limitation of his freedom, it is sweet to think of the broad, rapid rivers, with steep banks wild and luxuriant, of the impenetrable forests, of the boundless steppes. Slowly and quietly the fancy pictures how early in the morning, before the flush of dawn has left the sky, a man makes his way along the steep deserted bank like a tiny speck: the ancient, mast-like pines rise up in terraces on both sides of the torrent, gaze sternly at the free man and murmur menacingly; rocks, huge stones, and thorny bushes bar his way, but he is strong in body and bold in spirit, and has no fear of the pine-trees, nor stones, nor of his solitude, nor of the reverberating echo which repeats the sound of every footstep that he takes.

The peasants called up a picture of a free life such as they had never lived; whether they vaguely recalled the images of stories heard long ago or

her notions of a free life had been handed
to them with their flesh and blood from far-
ee ancestors, God knows!
he first to break the silence was Nikandr
zhnikov, who had not till then let fall a single
. Whether he envied the tramp's transparent
iness, or whether he felt in his heart that
ns of happiness were out of keeping with the
fog and the dirty brown mud — anyway, he
d sternly at the tramp and said:
It's all very well, to be sure, only you won't
those plenteous regions, brother. How could
Before you'd gone two hundred miles you'd
up your soul to God. Just look what a weak-
you are! Here you've hardly gone five miles
you can't get your breath."
he tramp turned slowly toward Nikandr, and

The tramp blinked guiltily, wiped the tiny drops of sweat from his forehead with his sleeve, drew a deep breath as though he had just leapt out of a very hot bath, then wiped his forehead with the other sleeve and looked round fearfully.

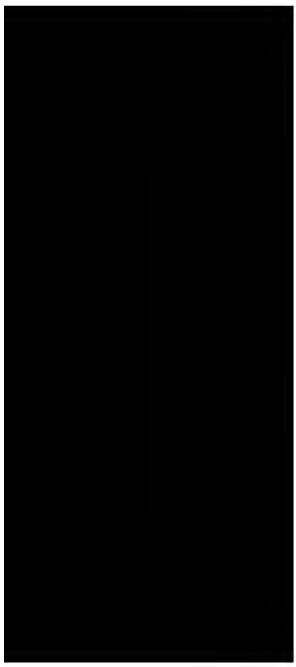
"That's true; you won't get there!" Ptaha agreed. "You are not much of a walker! Look at you — nothing but skin and bone! You'll die, brother!"

"Of course he'll die! What could he do?" said Nikandr. "He's fit for the hospital now. . . . For sure!"

The man who had forgotten his name looked at the stern, unconcerned faces of his sinister companions, and without taking off his cap, hurriedly crossed himself, staring with wide-open eyes. . . . He trembled, his head shook, and he began twitching all over, like a caterpillar when it is stepped upon. . . .

"Well, it's time to go," said Nikandr, getting up; "we've had a rest."

A minute later they were stepping along the muddy road. The tramp was more bent than ever, and he thrust his hands further up his sleeves. Ptaha was silent.



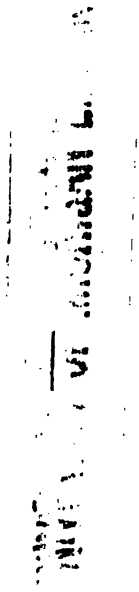
THE PIPE

THE PIPE

MELITON SHISHKIN, a bailiff from the Dementyev farm, exhausted by the sultry heat of the fir-wood and covered with spiders' webs and pine-needles, made his way with his gun to the edge of the wood. His Damka — a mongrel between a yard dog and a setter — an extremely thin bitch heavy with young, trailed after her master with her wet tail between her legs, doing all she could to avoid pricking her nose. It was a dull, overcast morning. Big drops dripped from the bracken and from the trees that were wrapped in a light mist; there was a pungent smell of decay from the dampness of the wood.

There were birch-trees ahead of him where the wood ended, and between their stems and branches he could see the misty distance. Beyond the birch-trees someone was playing on a shepherd's rustic pipe. The player produced no more than five or six notes, dragged them out languidly with no attempt at forming a tune, and yet there was something harsh and extremely dreary in the sound of the piping.

As the copse became sparser, and the pines were interspersed with young birch-trees, Meliton saw a herd. Hobbled horses, cows, and sheep were wandering among the bushes and, snapping the dry branches, sniffed at the herbage of the copse. A



seemed incongruou
fleshy face. "Ho
pipe! Whose her
"The Artamonc
luctantly, and he th
"So I suppose
too?" Meliton
"Yes, it is the Arta
completely lost mys
over in the thicket."
He sat down on
up a bit of newspa
Like his voice,
small and out of
breadth, and his fle
his buttons, his tiny
on his big, closely-c
and smiled there w
and meek about his
figure.
"What weather!
he turned his head

drizzling rain was falling, at the wood, at the bailiff's wet clothes, pondered, and said nothing.

"The whole summer has been the same," sighed Meliton. "A bad business for the peasants and no pleasure for the gentry."

The shepherd looked at the sky again, thought a moment, and said deliberately, as though chewing each word:

"It's all going the same way. . . . There is nothing good to be looked for."

"How are things with you here?" Meliton inquired, lighting his cigarette. "Haven't you seen any coveys of grouse in the Artamonovs' clearing?"

The shepherd did not answer at once. He looked again at the sky and to right and left, thought a little, blinked. . . . Apparently he attached no little significance to his words, and to increase their value tried to pronounce them with deliberation and a certain solemnity. The expression of his face had the sharpness and staidness of old age, and the fact that his nose had a saddle-shaped depression across the middle and his nostrils turned upwards gave him a sly and sarcastic look.

"No, I believe I haven't," he said. "Our huntsman Eryomka was saying that on Elijah's Day he started one covey near Pustoshye, but I dare say he was lying. There are very few birds."

"Yes, brother, very few. . . . Very few everywhere! The shooting here, if one is to look at it with common sense, is good for nothing and not worth having. There is no game at all, and what there is is not worth dirtying your hands over — it

is not full-grown. It is such poor stuff that one is ashamed to look at it."

Meliton gave a laugh and waved his hands.

"Things happen so queerly in this world that it is simply laughable and nothing else. Birds nowadays have become so unaccountable: they sit late on their eggs, and there are some, I declare, that have not hatched them by St. Peter's Day!"

"It's all going the same way," said the shepherd, turning his face upwards. "There was little game last year, this year there are fewer birds still, and in another five years, mark my words, there will be none at all. As far as I can see there will soon be not only no game, but no birds at all."

"Yes," Meliton assented, after a moment's thought. "That's true."

The shepherd gave a bitter smile and shook his head.

"It's a wonder," he said, "what has become of them all! I remember twenty years ago there used to be geese here, and cranes and ducks and grouse — clouds and clouds of them! The gentry used to meet together for shooting, and one heard nothing but pouf-pouf-pouf! pouf-pouf-pouf! There was no end to the woodcocks, the snipe, and the little teals, and the water-snipe were as common as starlings, or let us say sparrows — lots and lots of them! And what has become of them all? We don't even see the birds of prey. The eagles, the hawks, and the owls have all gone. . . . There are fewer of every sort of wild beast, too. Nowadays, brother, even the wolf and the fox have grown rare, let alone

the bear or the otter. And you know in old days there were even elks! For forty years I have been observing the works of God from year to year, and it is my opinion that everything is going the same way."

"What way?"

"To the bad, young man. To ruin, we must suppose. . . . The time has come for God's world to perish."

The old man put on his cap and began gazing at the sky.

"It's a pity," he sighed, after a brief silence. "O God, what a pity! Of course it is God's will; the world was not created by us, but yet it is a pity, brother. If a single tree withers away, or let us say a single cow dies, it makes one sorry, but what will it be, good man, if the whole world crumbles into dust? Such blessings, Lord Jesus! The sun, and the sky, and the forest, and the rivers, and the creatures — all these have been created, adapted, and adjusted to one another. Each has been put to its appointed task and knows its place. And all that must perish."

A mournful smile gleamed on the shepherd's face, and his eyelids quivered.

"You say — the world is perishing," said Meliton, pondering. "It may be that the end of the world is near at hand, but you can't judge by the birds. I don't think the birds can be taken as a sign."

"Not the birds only," said the shepherd. "It's the wild beasts, too, and the cattle, and the bees, and

fish. . . . If you don't believe me ask the old
le; every old man will tell you that the fish
not at all what they used to be. In the seas,
e lakes, and in the rivers, there are fewer fish
year to year. In our Pestchanka, I remember,
used to be caught a yard long, and there were
outs, and roach, and bream, and every fish had
esentable appearance; while nowadays, if you
a wretched little pikelet or perch six inches long
have to be thankful. There are not any gud-
even worth talking about. Every year it is
e and worse, and in a little while there will be
sh at all. And take the rivers now . . . the
s are drying up, for sure."

It is true; they are drying up."

To be sure, that's what I say. Every year they

brother, look where you will, things are bad everywhere. Everywhere!"

A silence followed. Meliton sank into thought, with his eyes fixed on one spot. He wanted to think of some one part of nature as yet untouched by the all-embracing ruin. Spots of light glistened on the mist and the slanting streaks of rain as though on opaque glass, and immediately died away again — it was the rising sun trying to break through the clouds and peep at the earth.

"Yes, the forests, too . . ." Meliton muttered.

"The forests, too," the shepherd repeated. "They cut them down, and they catch fire, and they wither away, and no new ones are growing. Whatever does grow up is cut down at once; one day it shoots up and the next it has been cut down — and so on without end till nothing's left. I have kept the herds of the commune ever since the time of Freedom, good man; before the time of Freedom I was shepherd of the master's herds. I have watched them in this very spot, and I can't remember a summer day in all my life that I have not been here. And all the time I have been observing the works of God. I have looked at them in my time till I know them, and it is my opinion that all things growing are on the decline. Whether you take the rye, or the vegetables, or flowers of any sort, they are all going the same way."

"But people have grown better," observed the bailiff.

"In what way better?"

"Cleverer."

Cleverer, maybe, that's true, young man; but
's the use of that? What earthly good is clev-
ss to people on the brink of ruin? One can per-
ithout cleverness. What's the good of clever-
to a huntsman if there is no game? What I
is that God has given men brains and taken
their strength. People have grown weak, ex-
ngly weak. Take me, for instance . . . I am
worth a halfpenny, I am the humblest peasant
e whole village, and yet, young man, I have
gth. Mind you, I am in my seventies, and I
my herd day in and day out, and keep the night
h, too, for twenty kopecks, and I don't sleep,
I don't feel the cold; my son is cleverer than I
ut put him in my place and he would ask for a
next day, or would be going to the doctors.

to know, and what is the sense of it? It makes you feel pitiful to look at him. . . . He is a thin, puny little fellow, like some Hungarian or Frenchman; there is no dignity nor air about him; it's only in name he is a gentleman. There is no place for him, poor dear, and nothing for him to do, and there is no making out what he wants. Either he sits with a hook catching fish, or he lolls on his back reading, or trots about among the peasants saying all sorts of things to them, and those that are hungry go in for being clerks. So he spends his life in vain. And he has no notion of doing something real and useful. The gentry in old days were half of them generals, but nowadays they are — a poor lot."

"They are badly off nowadays," said Meliton.

"They are poorer because God has taken away their strength. You can't go against God."

Meliton stared at a fixed point again. After thinking a little he heaved a sigh as staid, reasonable people do sigh, shook his head, and said:

"And all because of what? We have sinned greatly, we have forgotten God . . . and it seems that the time has come for all to end. And, after all, the world can't last for ever — it's time to know when to take leave."

The shepherd sighed and, as though wishing to cut short an unpleasant conversation, he walked away from the birch-tree and began silently reckoning over the cows.

"Hey-hey-hey!" he shouted. "Hey-hey-hey! Bother you, the plague take you! The devil has taken you into the thicket. Tu-lu-lu!"

With an angry face he went into the bushes to collect his herd. Meliton got up and sauntered slowly along the edge of the wood. He looked at the ground at his feet and pondered; he still wanted to think of something which had not yet been touched by death. Patches of light crept upon the slanting streaks of rain again; they danced on the tops of the trees and died away among the wet leaves. Damka found a hedgehog under a bush, and wanting to attract her master's attention to it, barked and howled.

"Did you have an eclipse or not?" the shepherd called from the bushes.

"Yes, we had," answered Meliton.

"Ah! Folks are complaining all about that there was one. It shows there is disorder even in the heavens! It's not for nothing. . . . Hey-hey-hey! Hey!"

Driving his herd together to the edge of the wood, the shepherd leaned against the birch-tree, looked up at the sky, without haste took his pipe from his bosom and began playing. As before, he played mechanically and took no more than five or six notes; as though the pipe had come into his hands for the first time, the sounds floated from it uncertainly, with no regularity, not blending into a tune, but to Meliton, brooding on the destruction of the world, there was a sound in it of something very depressing and revolting which he would much rather not have heard. The highest, shrillest notes, which quivered and broke, seemed to be weeping discon-

solately, as though the pipe were sick and frightened, while the lowest notes for some reason reminded him of the mist, the dejected trees, the grey sky. Such music seemed in keeping with the weather, the old man and his sayings.

Meliton wanted to complain. He went up to the old man and, looking at his mournful, mocking face and at the pipe, muttered:

"And life has grown worse, grandfather. It is utterly impossible to live. Bad crops, want. . . . Cattle plague continually, diseases of all sorts. . . . We are crushed by poverty."

The bailiff's puffy face turned crimson and took a dejected, womanish expression. He twirled his fingers as though seeking words to convey his vague feeling and went on:

"Eight children, a wife . . . and my mother still living, and my whole salary ten roubles a month and to board myself. My wife has become a Satan from poverty. . . . I go off drinking myself. I am a sensible, steady man; I have education. I ought to sit at home in peace, but I stray about all day with my gun like a dog because it is more than I can stand; my home is hateful to me!"

Feeling that his tongue was uttering something quite different from what he wanted to say, the bailiff waved his hand and said bitterly:

"If the world's going to end I wish it would make haste about it. There's no need to drag it out and make folks miserable for nothing. . . ."

The old man took the pipe from his lips and,

ving up one eye, looked into its little opening. face was sad and covered with thick drops like . He smiled and said:

It's a pity, my friend! My goodness, what a The earth, the forest, the sky, the beasts of orts — all this has been created, you know, ted; they all have their intelligence. It is all g to ruin. And most of all I am sorry for le."

here was the sound in the wood of heavy rain ng nearer. Meliton looked in the direction of ound, did up all his buttons, and said:

I am going to the village. Good-bye, grand- r. What is your name?"

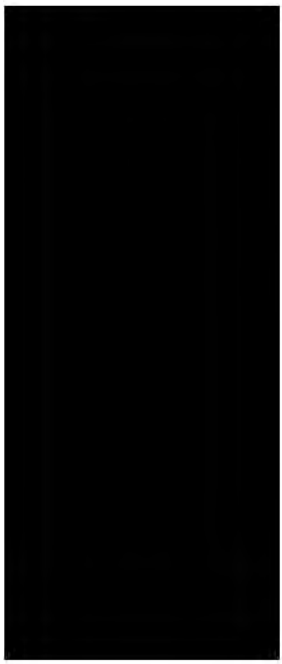
Luka the Poor."

Well, good-bye, Luka! Thank you for your words. Damka, ici!"

the general misery, and even they, as though afraid of insulting dispirited nature by the expression of their happiness, fill the air with their mournful, dreary notes.

Meliton plodded along to the river, and heard the sounds of the pipe gradually dying away behind him. He still wanted to complain. He looked dejectedly about him, and he felt insufferably sorry for the sky and the earth and the sun and the woods and his Damka, and when the highest drawn-out note of the pipe floated quivering in the air, like a voice weeping, he felt extremely bitter and resentful of the impropriety in the conduct of nature.

The high note quivered, broke off, and the pipe was silent.



AGAFYA

AGAFYA

DURING my stay in the district of S. I often used to go to see the watchman Savva Stukatch, or simply Savka, in the kitchen gardens of Dubovo. These kitchen gardens were my favorite resort for so-called "mixed" fishing, when one goes out without knowing what day or hour one may return, taking with one every sort of fishing tackle as well as a store of provisions. To tell the truth, it was not so much the fishing that attracted me as the peaceful stroll, the meals at no set time, the talk with Savka, and being for so long face to face with the calm summer nights. Savka was a young man of five-and-twenty, well grown and handsome, and as strong as a flint. He had the reputation of being a sensible and reasonable fellow. He could read and write, and very rarely drank, but as a workman this strong and healthy young man was not worth a farthing. A sluggish, overpowering sloth was mingled with the strength in his muscles, which were strong as cords. Like everyone else in his village, he lived in his own hut, and had his share of land, but neither tilled it nor sowed it, and did not work at any sort of trade. His old mother begged alms at people's windows and he himself lived like a bird of the air; he did not know in the morning what he would eat at midday.

s not that he was lacking in will, or energy, or
g for his mother; it was simply that he felt
clination for work and did not recognize the
ntage of it. His whole figure suggested un-
l serenity, an innate, almost artistic passion for
carelessly, never with his sleeves tucked up.
n Savka's young, healthy body had a physical
ng for muscular work, the young man aban-
l himself completely for a brief interval to some
but nonsensical pursuit, such as sharpening
s not wanted for any special purpose, or racing
after the peasant women. His favorite atti-
was one of concentrated immobility. He was
le of standing for hours at a stretch in the
place with his eyes fixed on the same spot with-
tirring. He never moved except on impulse,
hen only when an occasion presented itself for

dirty sackcloth cover close to the shanty from which came a heavy, fragrant scent of hay. Clasping my hands under my head I looked before me. At my feet was lying a wooden fork. Behind it Savka's dog Kutka stood out like a black patch, and not a dozen feet from Kutka the ground ended abruptly in the steep bank of the little river. Lying down I could not see the river; I could only see the tops of the young willows growing thickly on the nearer bank, and the twisting, as it were gnawed away, edges of the opposite bank. At a distance beyond the bank on the dark hillside the huts of the village in which Savka lived lay huddling together like frightened young partridges. Beyond the hill the afterglow of sunset still lingered in the sky. One pale crimson streak was all that was left, and even that began to be covered by little clouds as a fire with ash.

A copse with alder-trees, softly whispering, and from time to time shuddering in the fitful breeze, lay, a dark blur, on the right of the kitchen gardens; on the left stretched the immense plain. In the distance, where the eye could not distinguish between the sky and the plain, there was a bright gleam of light. A little way off from me sat Savka. With his legs tucked under him like a Turk and his head hanging, he looked pensively at Kutka. Our hooks with live bait on them had long been in the river, and we had nothing left to do but to abandon ourselves to repose, which Savka, who was never exhausted and always rested, loved so much. The glow had not yet quite died away, but the summer

was already enfolding nature in its caressing,
ng embrace.
erything was sinking into its first deep sleep
some night bird unfamiliar to me, which indo-
uttered a long, protracted cry in several dis-
notes like the phrase, "Have you seen Ni-
" and immediately answered itself, "Seen
een him, seen him!"
Why is it the nightingales aren't singing to-
?" I asked Savka.
turned slowly towards me. His features were
but his face was open, soft, and expressive
woman's. Then he gazed with his mild,
y eyes at the copse, at the willows, slowly
a whistle out of his pocket, put it in his mouth
histled the note of a hen-nightingale. And at
as though in answer to his call, a landrail

tened attentively, looking at me without blinking, and smiling all the while with pleasure.

"And which country is most the bird's home? Ours or those foreign parts?" he asked.

"Ours, of course. The bird itself is hatched here, and it hatches out its little ones here in its native country, and they only fly off there to escape being frozen."

"It's interesting," said Savka. "Whatever one talks about it is always interesting. Take a bird now, or a man . . . or take this little stone; there's something to learn about all of them. . . . Ah, sir, if I had known you were coming I wouldn't have told a woman to come here this evening. . . . She asked to come to-day."

"Oh, please don't let me be in your way," I said. "I can lie down in the wood. . . ."

"What next! She wouldn't have died if she hadn't come till to-morrow. . . . If only she would sit quiet and listen, but she always wants to be slobbering. . . . You can't have a good talk when she's here."

"Are you expecting Darya?" I asked, after a pause.

"No . . . a new one has asked to come this evening . . . Agafya, the signalman's wife."

Savka said this in his usual passionless, somewhat hollow voice, as though he were talking of tobacco or porridge, while I started with surprise. I knew Agafya. . . . She was quite a young peasant woman of nineteen or twenty, who had been married not more than a year before to a railway signalman, a

fine young fellow. She lived in the village, and her husband came home there from the line every night.

"Your goings on with the women will lead to trouble, my boy," said I.

"Well, may be, . . ."

And after a moment's thought Savka added:

"I've said so to the women; they won't heed me. . . . They don't trouble about it, the silly things!"

Silence followed. . . . Meanwhile the darkness was growing thicker and thicker, and objects began to lose their contours. The streak behind the hill had completely died away, and the stars were growing brighter and more luminous. . . . The mournfully monotonous chirping of the grasshoppers, the call of the landrail, and the cry of the quail did not destroy the stillness of the night, but, on the contrary, gave it an added monotony. It seemed as though the soft sounds that enchanted the ear came, not from birds or insects, but from the stars looking down upon us from the sky. . . .

Savka was the first to break the silence. He slowly turned his eyes from black Kutka and said:

"I see you are dull, sir. Let's have supper."

And without waiting for my consent he crept on his stomach into the shanty, rummaged about there, making the whole edifice tremble like a leaf; then he crawled back and set before me my vodka and an earthenware bowl; in the bowl there were baked eggs, lard scones made of rye, pieces of black bread, and something else. . . . We had a drink from a little crooked glass that wouldn't stand, and then we fell upon the food. . . . Coarse grey salt, dirty,

greasy cakes, eggs tough as india-rubber, but how nice it all was!

"You live all alone, but what lots of good things you have," I said, pointing to the bowl. "Where do you get them from?"

"The women bring them," mumbled Savka.

"What do they bring them to you for?"

"Oh . . . from pity."

Not only Savka's menu, but his clothing, too, bore traces of feminine "pity." Thus I noticed that he had on, that evening, a new woven belt and a crimson ribbon on which a copper cross hung round his dirty neck. I knew of the weakness of the fair sex for Savka, and I knew that he did not like talking about it, and so I did not carry my inquiries any further. Besides there was not time to talk. . . . Kutka, who had been fidgeting about near us and patiently waiting for scraps, suddenly pricked up his ears and growled. We heard in the distance repeated splashing of water.

"Someone is coming by the ford," said Savka.

Three minutes later Kutka growled again and made a sound like a cough.

"Shsh!" his master shouted at him.

In the darkness there was a muffled thud of timid footsteps, and the silhouette of a woman appeared out of the copse. I recognized her, although it was dark — it was Agafya. She came up to us diffidently and stopped, breathing hard. She was breathless, probably not so much from walking as from fear and the unpleasant sensation everyone experiences in wading across a river at night. See-

near the shanty not one but two persons, she
ed a faint cry and fell back a step.
Ah . . . that is you!" said Savka, stuffing a
into his mouth.
Ye-es . . . I," she muttered, dropping on the
nd a bundle of some sort and looking sideways
e. "Yakov sent his greetings to you and told
o give you . . . something here. . . ."
Come, why tell stories? Yakov!" laughed
a. "There is no need for lying; the gentle-
knows why you have come! Sit down; you
have supper with us."
gafya looked sideways at me and sat down irres-
ly.
I thought you weren't coming this evening,"
a said, after a prolonged silence. "Why sit
that? Eat! Or shall I give you a drop of

In the darkness I did not see Agafya's face, but from the movement of her shoulders and head it seemed to me that she could not take her eyes off Savka's face. To avoid being the third person at this tryst, I decided to go for a walk and got up. But at that moment a nightingale in the wood suddenly uttered two low contralto notes. Half a minute later it gave a tiny high trill and then, having thus tried its voice, began singing. Savka jumped up and listened.

"It's the same one as yesterday," he said. "Wait a minute."

And, getting up, he went noiselessly to the wood.

"Why, what do you want with it?" I shouted out after him, "Stop!"

Savka shook his hand as much as to say, "Don't shout," and vanished into the darkness. Savka was an excellent sportsman and fisherman when he liked, but his talents in this direction were as completely thrown away as his strength. He was too slothful to do things in the routine way, and vented his passion for sport in useless tricks. For instance, he would catch nightingales only with his hands, would shoot pike with a fowling piece, he would spend whole hours by the river trying to catch little fish with a big hook.

Left alone with me, Agafya coughed and passed her hand several times over her forehead. . . . She began to feel a little drunk from the vodka.

"How are you getting on, Agasha?" I asked her, after a long silence, when it began to be awkward to remain mute any longer.

Very well, thank God. . . . Don't tell anyone, will you?" she added suddenly in a whisper.

That's all right," I reassured her. "But how ess you are, Agasha! . . . What if Yakov out?"

He won't find out."

But what if he does?"

No . . . I shall be at home before he is. He the line now, and he will come back when mail train brings him, and from here I can when the train's coming. . . ."

gafya once more passed her hand over her fore- and looked away in the direction in which a had vanished. The nightingale was singing. e night bird flew low down close to the ground noticing us, was startled, fluttered its wings and

Agafya kept her eyes fixed on the copse for a long time and moved her hands impatiently.

"Why, where can he be?" she said, laughing nervously. "Where has the devil carried him? I am going! I really must be going."

Meanwhile the noise was growing more and more distinct. By now one could distinguish the rumble of the wheels from the heavy gasps of the engine. Then we heard the whistle; the train crossed the bridge with a hollow rumble . . . another minute and all was still.

"I'll wait one minute more," said Agafya, sitting down resolutely. "So be it, I'll wait."

At last Savka appeared in the darkness. He walked noiselessly on the crumbling earth of the kitchen gardens and hummed something softly to himself.

"Here's a bit of luck; what do you say to that now?" he said gaily. "As soon as I got up to the bush and began taking aim with my hand it left off singing! Ah, the bald dog! I waited and waited to see when it would begin again, but I had to give it up."

Savka flopped clumsily down to the ground beside Agafya and, to keep his balance, clutched at her waist with both hands.

"Why do you look cross, as though your aunt were your mother?" he asked.

With all his soft-heartedness and good-nature, Savka despised women. He behaved carelessly, condescendingly with them, and even stooped to scornful laughter of their feelings for himself. God

's, perhaps this careless, contemptuous manner one of the causes of his irresistible attraction he village Dulcineas. He was handsome and built; in his eyes there was always a soft friend-s, even when he was looking at the women he espised, but the fascination was not to be ex-ed by merely external qualities. Apart from appy exterior and original manner, one must ose that the touching position of Savka as an owledged failure and an unhappy exile from his hut to the kitchen gardens also had an influence the women.

Tell the gentleman what you have come here " Savka went on, still holding Agafya by the . " Come, tell him, you good married woman! o! Shall we have another drop of vodka, d Agasha?"

Agafya, intoxicated by the vodka, by Savka's scornful caresses, and by the stifling warmth of the night, was lying on the earth beside him, pressing her face convulsively to his knees. She was so carried away by her feelings that she did not even notice my arrival.

"Agasha, the train has been in a long time," I said.

"It's time — it's time you were gone," Savka, tossing his head, took up my thought. "What are you sprawling here for? You shameless hussy!"

Agafya started, took her head from his knees, glanced at me, and sank down beside him again.

"You ought to have gone long ago," I said.

Agafya turned round and got up on one knee. . . . She was unhappy. . . . For half a minute her whole figure, as far as I could distinguish it through the darkness, expressed conflict and hesitation. There was an instant when, seeming to come to herself, she drew herself up to get upon her feet, but then some invincible and implacable force seemed to push her whole body, and she sank down beside Savka again.

"Bother him!" she said, with a wild, guttural laugh, and reckless determination, impotence, and pain could be heard in that laugh.

I strolled quietly away to the copse, and from there down to the river, where our fishing lines were set. The river slept. Some soft, fluffy-petalled flower on a tall stalk touched my cheek tenderly like a child who wants to let one know it's awake. To pass the time I felt for one of the lines and pulled

It yielded easily and hung limply — nothing been caught. . . . The further bank and the ge could not be seen. A light gleamed in one but soon went out. I felt my way along the , found a hollow place which I had noticed in laylight, and sat down in it as in an arm-chair. there a long time. . . . I saw the stars begin ow misty and lose their brightness; a cool breath d over the earth like a faint sigh and touched eaves of the slumbering osiers. . . .

A-ga-fya!" a hollow voice called from the vil-

"Agafya!"

was the husband, who had returned home, and arm was looking for his wife in the village. hat moment there came the sound of unre-ned laughter: the wife, forgetful of everything, ht in her intoxication to make up by a few

"There she is," said Savka, pointing in the direction of the ford.

I glanced and saw Agafya. Dishevelled, with her kerchief dropping off her head, she was crossing the river, holding up her skirt. Her legs were scarcely moving. . . .

"The cat knows whose meat it has eaten," muttered Savka, screwing up his eyes as he looked at her. "She goes with her tail hanging down. . . . They are sly as cats, these women, and timid as hares. . . . She didn't go, silly thing, in the evening when we told her to! Now she will catch it, and they'll flog me again at the peasant court . . . all on account of the women. . . ."

Agafya stepped upon the bank and went across the fields to the village. At first she walked fairly boldly, but soon terror and excitement got the upper hand; she turned round fearfully, stopped and took breath.

"Yes, you are frightened!" Savka laughed mournfully, looking at the bright green streak left by Agafya in the dewy grass. "She doesn't want to go! Her husband's been standing waiting for her for a good hour. . . . Did you see him?"

Savka said the last words with a smile, but they sent a chill to my heart. In the village, near the furthest hut, Yakov was standing in the road, gazing fixedly at his returning wife. He stood without stirring, and was as motionless as a post. What was he thinking as he looked at her? What words was he preparing to greet her with? Agafya stood still

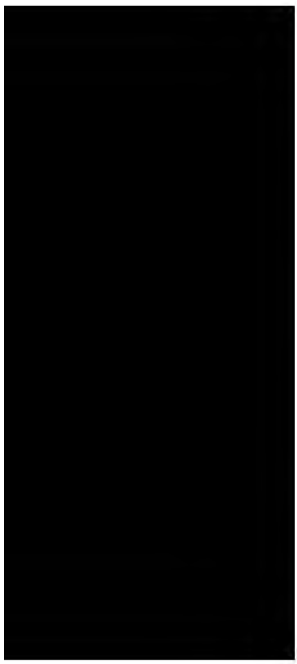
tle while, looked round once more as though cting help from us, and went on. I have never anyone, drunk or sober, move as she did. fya seemed to be shrivelled up by her husband's At one time she moved in zigzags, then she ed her feet up and down without going forward, ing her knees and stretching out her hands, then staggered back. When she had gone another red paces she looked round once more and sat n.

You ought at least to hide behind a bush . . ." d to Savka. " If the husband sees you . . ."

He knows, anyway, who it is Agafya has come . . . . The women don't go to the kitchen en at night for cabbages — we all know that."

glanced at Savka's face. It was pale and ered up with a look of fastidious pity such as

AT CHRISTMAS TIME



AT CHRISTMAS TIME

I

"WHAT shall I write?" said Yegor, and he dipped his pen in the ink.

Vasilisa had not seen her daughter for four years. Her daughter Yefimya had gone after her wedding to Petersburg, had sent them two letters, and since then seemed to vanish out of their lives; there had been no sight nor sound of her. And whether the old woman were milking her cow at dawn, or heating her stove, or dozing at night, she was always thinking of one and the same thing — what was happening to Yefimya, whether she were alive out yonder. She ought to have sent a letter, but the old father could not write, and there was no one to write.

But now Christmas had come, and Vasilisa could not bear it any longer, and went to the tavern to Yegor, the brother of the innkeeper's wife, who had sat in the tavern doing nothing ever since he came back from the army; people said that he could write letters very well if he were properly paid. Vasilisa talked to the cook at the tavern, then to the mistress of the house, then to Yegor himself. They agreed upon fifteen kopecks.

And now — it happened on the second day of the holidays, in the tavern kitchen — Yegor was

g at the table, holding the pen in his hand. lisa was standing before him, pondering with expression of anxiety and woe on her face. r, her husband, a very thin old man with a nish bald patch, had come with her; he stood ng straight before him like a blind man. On stove a piece of pork was being braised in a pan; it was spurting and hissing, and seemed e actually saying: "Flu-flu-flu." It was sti-

What am I to write?" Yegor asked again.
What?" asked Vasilisa, looking at him angrily suspiciously. "Don't worry me! You are not ng for nothing; no fear, you'll be paid for it. e, write: 'To our dear son-in-law, Andrey anfitch, and to our only beloved daughter, Yefi- Petrovna, with our love we send a low bow

flowed into the sea, the old people had lived feeling bereaved, and sighed heavily at night as though they had buried their daughter. And how many events had occurred in the village since then, how many marriages and deaths! How long the winters had been! How long the nights!

"It's hot," said Yegor, unbuttoning his waistcoat. "It must be seventy degrees. What more?" he asked.

The old people were silent.

"What does your son-in-law do in Petersburg?" asked Yegor.

"He was a soldier, my good friend," the old man answered in a weak voice. "He left the service at the same time as you did. He was a soldier, and now, to be sure, he is at Petersburg at a hydropathic establishment. The doctor treats the sick with water. So he, to be sure, is house-porter at the doctor's."

"Here it is written down," said the old woman, taking a letter out of her pocket. "We got it from Yefimya, goodness knows when. Maybe they are no longer in this world."

Yegor thought a little and began writing rapidly:

"At the present time"— he wrote —"since your destiny through your own doing allotted you to the Military Career, we counsel you to look into the Code of Disciplinary Offences and Fundamental Laws of the War Office, and you will see in that law the Civilization of the Officials of the War Office."

He wrote and kept reading aloud what was written, while Vasilisa considered what she ought to write: how great had been their want the year before, how their corn had not lasted even till Christmas, how they had to sell their cow. She ought to ask for money, ought to write that the old father was often ailing and would soon no doubt give up his soul to God . . . but how to express this in words? What must be said first and what afterwards?

"Take note," Yegor went on writing, "in volume five of the Army Regulations soldier is a common noun and a proper one, a soldier of the first rank is called a general, and of the last a private. . . ."

The old man stirred his lips and said softly:

"It would be all right to have a look at the grandchildren."

"What grandchildren?" asked the old woman, and she looked angrily at him; "perhaps there are none."

"Well, but perhaps there are. Who knows?"

"And thereby you can judge," Yegor hurried on, "what is the enemy without and what is the enemy within. The foremost of our enemies within is Bacchus." The pen squeaked, executing upon the paper flourishes like fish-hooks. Yegor hastened and read over every line several times. He sat on a stool sprawling his broad feet under the table, well-fed, bursting with health, with a coarse animal face and a red bull neck. He was vulgarity itself: coarse, conceited, invincible, proud of having been

born and bred in a pot-house; and Vasilisa quite understood the vulgarity, but could not express it in words, and could only look angrily and suspiciously at Yegor. Her head was beginning to ache, and her thoughts were in confusion from the sound of his voice and his unintelligible words, from the heat and the stuffiness, and she said nothing and thought nothing, but simply waited for him to finish scribbling. But the old man looked with full confidence. He believed in his old woman who had brought him there, and in Yegor; and when he had mentioned the hydropathic establishment it could be seen that he believed in the establishment and the healing efficacy of water.

Having finished the letter, Yegor got up and read the whole of it through from the beginning. The old man did not understand, but he nodded his head trustfully.

"That's all right; it is smooth . . ." he said. "God give you health. That's all right. . . ."

They laid on the table three five-kopeck pieces and went out of the tavern; the old man looked immovably straight before him as though he were blind, and perfect trustfulness was written on his face; but as Vasilisa came out of the tavern she waved angrily at the dog, and said angrily:

"Ugh, the plague."

The old woman did not sleep all night; she was disturbed by thoughts, and at daybreak she got up, said her prayers, and went to the station to send off the letter.

It was between eight and nine miles to the station.

II

r. B. O. Mozelweiser's hydropathic establish-
worked on New Year's Day exactly as on
nary days; the only difference was that the por-
Andrey Hrisanfitch, had on a uniform with new
ling, his boots had an extra polish, and he
ted every visitor with "A Happy New Year
ou!"

was the morning; Andrey Hrisanfitch was
ling at the door, reading the newspaper. Just
n o'clock there arrived a general, one of the
ual visitors, and directly after him the post-
Andrey Hrisanfitch helped the general off with
reat-coat, and said:

by, laying its curly head on her knee; a third was asleep on the bed.

Going into the room, Andrey gave his wife the letter and said:

"From the country, I suppose."

Then he walked out again without taking his eyes from the paper. He could hear Yefimya with a shaking voice reading the first lines. She read them and could read no more; these lines were enough for her. She burst into tears, and hugging her eldest child, kissing him, she began saying — and it was hard to say whether she were laughing or crying:

"It's from granny, from grandfather," she said. "From the country. . . . The Heavenly Mother, Saints and Martyrs! The snow lies heaped up under the roofs now . . . the trees are as white as white. The boys slide on little sledges . . . and dear old bald grandfather is on the stove . . . and there is a little yellow dog. . . . My own darlings!"

Andrey Hrisanfitch, hearing this, recalled that his wife had on three or four occasions given him letters and asked him to send them to the country, but some important business had always prevented him; he had not sent them, and the letters somehow got lost.

"And little hares run about in the fields," Yefimya went on chanting, kissing her boy and shedding tears. "Grandfather is kind and gentle; granny is good, too — kind-hearted. They are warm-hearted in the country, they are God-fearing . . . and there is a little church in the village; the peasants sing in the

choir. Queen of Heaven, Holy Mother and Defender, take us away from here!"

Andrey Hrisanfitch returned to his room to smoke a little till there was another ring at the door, and Yefimya ceased speaking, subsided, and wiped her eyes, though her lips were still quivering. She was very much frightened of him — oh, how frightened of him! She trembled and was reduced to terror by the sound of his steps, by the look in his eyes, and dared not utter a word in his presence.

Andrey Hrisanfitch lighted a cigarette, but at that very moment there was a ring from upstairs. He put out his cigarette, and, assuming a very grave face, hastened to his front door.

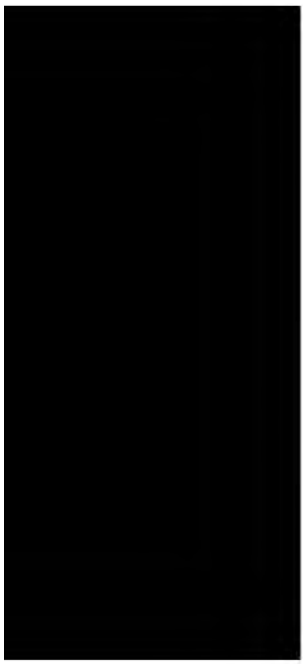
The general was coming downstairs, fresh and rosy from his bath.

"And what is there in that room?" he asked, pointing to a door.

Andrey Hrisanfitch put his hands down swiftly to the seams of his trousers, and pronounced loudly:

"Charcot douche, your Excellency!"

GUSEV



GUSEV

I

It was getting dark; it would soon be night.

Gusev, a discharged soldier, sat up in his hammock and said in an undertone:

"I say, Pavel Ivanitch. A soldier at Sutchan told me: while they were sailing a big fish came into collision with their ship and stove a hole in it."

The nondescript individual whom he was addressing, and whom everyone in the ship's hospital called Pavel Ivanitch, was silent, as though he had not heard.

And again a stillness followed. . . . The wind frolicked with the rigging, the screw throbbed, the waves lashed, the hammocks creaked, but the ear had long ago become accustomed to these sounds, and it seemed that everything around was asleep and silent. It was dreary. The three invalids — two soldiers and a sailor — who had been playing cards all the day were asleep and talking in their dreams.

It seemed as though the ship were beginning to rock. The hammock slowly rose and fell under Gusev, as though it were heaving a sigh, and this was repeated once, twice, three times. . . . Something crashed on to the floor with a clang: it must have been a jug falling down.

The wind has broken loose from its chain . . ."
Gusev, listening.
his time Pavel Ivanitch cleared his throat and
ered irritably:
One minute a vessel's running into a fish, the
the wind's breaking loose from its chain. . . .
e wind a beast that it can break loose from its
?"
That's how christened folk talk."
They are as ignorant as you are then. . . .
say all sorts of things. One must keep a head
ne's shoulders and use one's reason. You are
seless creature."
vel Ivanitch was subject to sea-sickness. When
ea was rough he was usually ill-humoured, and
nerest trifle would make him irritable. And

which he was returning after five years' service in the East. He pictured an immense pond covered with snow. . . . On one side of the pond the red-brick building of the potteries with a tall chimney and clouds of black smoke; on the other side — a village. . . . His brother Alexey comes out in a sledge from the fifth yard from the end; behind him sits his little son Vanka in big felt over-boots, and his little girl Akulka, also in big felt boots. Alexey has been drinking, Vanka is laughing, Akulka's face he could not see, she had muffled herself up.

"You never know, he'll get the children frozen . . ." thought Gusev. "Lord send them sense and judgment that they may honour their father and mother and not be wiser than their parents."

"They want re-soleing," a delirious sailor says in a bass voice. "Yes, yes!"

Gusev's thoughts break off, and instead of a pond there suddenly appears apropos of nothing a huge bull's head without eyes, and the horse and sledge are not driving along, but are whirling round and round in a cloud of smoke. But still he was glad he had seen his own folks. He held his breath from delight, shudders ran all over him, and his fingers twitched.

"The Lord let us meet again," he muttered feverishly, but he at once opened his eyes and sought in the darkness for water.

He drank and lay back, and again the sledge was moving, then again the bull's head without eyes, smoke, clouds. . . . And so on till daybreak.

II

first outline visible in the darkness was a
rcle — the little round window; then little
le Gusev could distinguish his neighbour in
t hammock, Pavel Ivanitch. The man slept
up, as he could not breathe lying down. His
as grey, his nose was long and sharp, his eyes
huge from the terrible thinness of his face,
nples were sunken, his beard was skimpy, his
as long. . . . Looking at him you could not
ut of what class he was, whether he were a
nan, a merchant, or a peasant. Judging from
ression and his long hair he might have been
it or a lay brother in a monastery — but if

get sick of looking after poor brutes like you. . . . You don't pay them anything, they have a bother with you, and you damage their records with your deaths — so, of course, you are brutes! It's not difficult to get rid of you. . . . All that is necessary is, in the first place, to have no conscience or humanity, and, secondly, to deceive the steamer authorities. The first condition need hardly be considered, in that respect we are artists; and one can always succeed in the second with a little practice. In a crowd of four hundred healthy soldiers and sailors half a dozen sick ones are not conspicuous; well, they drove you all on to the steamer, mixed you with the healthy ones, hurriedly counted you over, and in the confusion nothing amiss was noticed, and when the steamer had started they saw that there were paralytics and consumptives in the last stage lying about on the deck. . . ."

Gusev did not understand Pavel Ivanitch; but supposing he was being blamed, he said in self-defence:

"I lay on the deck because I had not the strength to stand; when we were unloaded from the barge on to the ship I caught a fearful chill."

"It's revolting," Pavel Ivanitch went on. "The worst of it is they know perfectly well that you can't last out the long journey, and yet they put you here. Supposing you get as far as the Indian Ocean, what then? It's horrible to think of it. . . . And that's their gratitude for your faithful, irreproachable service!"

Pavel Ivanitch's eyes looked angry; he frowned contemptuously and said, gasping:

ose are the people who ought to be plucked
newspapers till the feathers fly in all direc-

two sick soldiers and the sailor were awake
eady playing cards. The sailor was half re-
in his hammock, the soldiers were sitting near
the floor in the most uncomfortable attitudes.
the soldiers had his right arm in a sling,
e hand was swathed up in a regular bundle
he held his cards under his right arm or
crook of his elbow while he played with the
The ship was rolling heavily. They could
nd up, nor drink tea, nor take their medi-

ere you an officer's servant?" Pavel Ivanitch
Gusev.

the day and you sit in the kitchen and pine for home. . . . Plans indeed! . . . It is not plans that matter, but a human life. Life is not given twice, it must be treated mercifully."

"Of course, Pavel Ivanitch, a bad man gets no mercy anywhere, neither at home nor in the army, but if you live as you ought and obey orders, who has any need to insult you? The officers are educated gentlemen, they understand. . . . In five years I was never once in prison, and I was never struck a blow, so help me God, but once."

"What for?"

"For fighting. I have a heavy hand, Pavel Ivanitch. Four Chinamen came into our yard; they were bringing firewood or something, I don't remember. Well, I was bored and I knocked them about a bit, one's nose began bleeding, damn the fellow. . . . The lieutenant saw it through the little window, he was angry and gave me a box on the ear."

"Foolish, pitiful man . . ." whispered Pavel Ivanitch. "You don't understand anything."

He was utterly exhausted by the tossing of the ship and closed his eyes; his head alternately fell back and dropped forward on his breast. Several times he tried to lie down but nothing came of it; his difficulty in breathing prevented it.

"And what did you hit the four Chinamen for?" he asked a little while afterwards.

"Oh, nothing. They came into the yard and I hit them."

And a stillness followed. . . . The card-players

been playing for two hours with enthusiasm
loud abuse of one another, but the motion of
hip overcame them, too; they threw aside the
and lay down. Again Gusev saw the big
, the brick building, the village. . . . Again
edge was coming along, again Vanka was laugh-
nd Akulka, silly little thing, threw open her fur
and stuck her feet out, as much as to say:
ok, good people, my snowboots are not like
a's, they are new ones."

Five years old, and she has no sense yet," Gusev
ered in delirium. " Instead of kicking your legs
had better come and get your soldier uncle a
. I will give you something nice."

hen Andron with a flintlock gun on his shoulder
carrying a hare he had killed, and he was fol-
d by the decrepit old Jew Isaitchik, who offers

the soldiers playing cards. . . . He called hearts diamonds, got muddled in his score, and dropped his cards, then with a frightened, foolish smile looked round at all of them.

"I shan't be a minute, mates, I'll . . ." he said, and lay down on the floor.

Everybody was amazed. They called to him, he did not answer.

"Stephan, maybe you are feeling bad, eh?" the soldier with his arm in a sling asked him. "Perhaps we had better bring the priest, eh?"

"Have a drink of water, Stepan . . ." said the sailor. "Here, lad, drink."

"Why are you knocking the jug against his teeth?" said Gusev angrily. "Don't you see, turnip head?'

"What?"

"What?" Gusev repeated, mimicking him. "There is no breath in him, he is dead! That's what! What nonsensical people, Lord have mercy on us . . . !"

III

The ship was not rocking and Pavel Ivanitch was more cheerful. He was no longer ill-humoured. His face had a boastful, defiant, mocking expression. He looked as though he wanted to say: "Yes, in a minute I will tell you something that will make you split your sides with laughing." The little round window was open and a soft breeze was blowing on Pavel Ivanitch. There was a sound of

s, of the plash of oars in the water. . . . Just
r the little window someone began droning in
h, unpleasant voice: no doubt it was a China-
singing.

Here we are in the harbour," said Pavel Ivan-
smiling ironically. "Only another month and
all be in Russia. Well, worthy gentlemen and
lors! I shall arrive at Odessa and from there
raight to Harkov. In Harkov I have a friend,
rary man. I shall go to him and say, 'Come,
man, put aside your horrid subjects, ladies'
rs and the beauties of nature, and show up
n depravity.'"

r a minute he pondered, then said:

Gusev, do you know how I took them in?"

Took in whom, Pavel Ivanitch?"

Why, these fellows. . . . You know that on

pilfered government money. I haven't exploited the natives, I haven't trafficked in contraband, I have flogged no one to death, so judge whether I have the right to travel first-class and even less to reckon myself of the educated class? But you won't catch them with logic. . . . One has to resort to deception. I put on a workman's coat and high boots, I assumed a drunken, servile mug and went to the agents: 'Give us a little ticket, your honour,' said I. . . ."

"Why, what class do you belong to?" asked a sailor.

"Clerical. My father was an honest priest, he always told the great ones of the world the truth to their faces; and he had a great deal to put up with in consequence."

Pavel Ivanitch was exhausted with talking and gasped for breath, but still went on:

"Yes, I always tell people the truth to their faces. I am not afraid of anyone or anything. There is a vast difference between me and all of you in that respect. You are in darkness, you are blind, crushed; you see nothing and what you do see you don't understand. . . . You are told the wind breaks loose from its chain, that you are beasts, Petchenyegs, and you believe it; they punch you in the neck, you kiss their hands; some animal in a sable-lined coat robs you and then tips you fifteen kopecks and you: 'Let me kiss your hand, sir.' You are pariahs, pitiful people. . . . I am a different sort. My eyes are open, I see it all as clearly as a hawk or an eagle when it floats over the earth,

I understand it all. I am a living protest. I
rresponsible tyranny — I protest. I see cant
ypocrisy — I protest. I see swine triumphant
protest. And I cannot be suppressed, no Span-
nquisition can make me hold my tongue. No.
Cut out my tongue and I would protest in
o show; shut me up in a cellar — I will shout
it to be heard half a mile away, or I will starve
lf to death that they may have another weight
heir black consciences. Kill me and I will
t them with my ghost. All my acquaintances
o me: 'You are a most insufferable person,
l Ivanitch.' I am proud of such a reputation.
ve served three years in the far East, and I
be remembered there for a hundred years:
l rows with everyone. My friends write to me
Russia, 'Don't come back,' but here I am

"I should like to give that fat fellow one in the neck," thought Gusev, gazing at the stout Chinaman, with a yawn.

He dozed off, and it seemed to him that all nature was dozing, too. Time flew swiftly by; imperceptibly the day passed, imperceptibly the darkness came on. . . . The steamer was no longer standing still, but moving on further.

IV

Two days passed, Pavel Ivanitch lay down instead of sitting up; his eyes were closed, his nose seemed to have grown sharper.

"Pavel Ivanitch," Gusev called to him. "Hey, Pavel Ivanitch."

Pavel Ivanitch opened his eyes and moved his lips.

"Are you feeling bad?"

"No . . . it's nothing . . ." answered Pavel Ivanitch, gasping. "Nothing; on the contrary . . . I am rather better. . . . You see I can lie down. . . . I am a little easier. . . ."

"Well, thank God for that, Pavel Ivanitch."

"When I compare myself with you I am sorry for you . . . poor fellow. My lungs are all right, it is only a stomach cough. . . . I can stand hell, let alone the Red Sea. Besides I take a critical attitude to my illness and to the medicines they give me for it. While you . . . you are in darkness. . . . It's hard for you, very, very hard!"

The ship was not rolling, it was calm, but as hot

and stifling as a bath-house; it was not only hard to speak but even hard to listen. Gusev hugged his knees, laid his head on them and thought of his home. Good heavens, what a relief it was to think of snow and cold in that stifling heat! You drive in a sledge, all at once the horses take fright at something and bolt. . . . Regardless of the road, the ditches, the ravines, they dash like mad things, right through the village, over the pond by the pottery works, out across the open fields. "Hold on," the pottery hands and the peasants shout, meeting them. "Hold on." But why? Let the keen, cold wind beat in one's face and bite one's hands; let the lumps of snow, kicked up by the horses' hoofs, fall on one's cap, on one's back, down one's collar, on one's chest; let the runners ring on the snow, and the traces and the sledge be smashed, deuce take them one and all! And how delightful when the sledge upsets and you go flying full tilt into a drift, face downwards in the snow, and then you get up white all over with icicles on your moustaches; no cap, no gloves, your belt undone. . . . People laugh, the dogs bark. . . .

Pavel Ivanitch half opened one eye, looked at Gusev with it, and asked softly:

"Gusev, did your commanding officer steal?"

"Who can tell, Pavel Ivanitch! We can't say, it didn't reach us."

And after that a long time passed in silence. Gusev brooded, muttered something in delirium, and kept drinking water; it was hard for him to talk and hard to listen, and he was afraid of being talked

to. An hour passed, a second, a third; evening came on, then night, but he did not notice it. He still sat dreaming of the frost.

There was a sound as though someone came into the hospital, and voices were audible, but a few minutes passed and all was still again.

"The Kingdom of Heaven and eternal peace," said the soldier with his arm in a sling. "He was an uncomfortable man."

"What?" asked Gusev. "Who?"

"He is dead, they have just carried him up."

"Oh, well," muttered Gusev, yawning, "the Kingdom of Heaven be his."

"What do you think?" the soldier with his arm in a sling asked Gusev. "Will he be in the Kingdom of Heaven or not?"

"Who is it you are talking about?"

"Pavel Ivanitch."

"He will be . . . he suffered so long. And there is another thing, he belonged to the clergy, and the priests always have a lot of relations. Their prayers will save him."

The soldier with the sling sat down on a hammock near Gusev and said in an undertone:

"And you, Gusev, are not long for this world. You will never get to Russia."

"Did the doctor or his assistant say so?" asked Gusev.

"It isn't that they said so, but one can see it. . . . One can see directly when a man's going to die. You don't eat, you don't drink; it's dreadful to see how thin you've got. It's consumption, in fact. I

t, not to upset you, but because maybe you
l like to have the sacrament and extreme unc-
And if you have any money you had better
t to the senior officer."
haven't written home . . ." Gusev sighed.
all die and they won't know."
They'll hear of it," the sick sailor brought out
bass voice. "When you die they will put it
in the *Gazette,* at Odessa they will send in a
t to the commanding officer there and he will
it to the parish or somewhere. . . ."
sev began to be uneasy after such a conversa-
nd to feel a vague yearning. He drank wa-
it was not that; he dragged himself to the
w and breathed the hot, moist air — it was
at; he tried to think of home, of the frost —
not that. At last it seemed to him one

on the masts, nor anywhere on the sea around. At the furthest end of the ship the man on watch was standing perfectly still like a statue, and it looked as though he were asleep. It seemed as though the steamer were abandoned to itself and were going at its own will.

"Now they will throw Pavel Ivanitch into the sea," said the soldier with the sling. "In a sack and then into the water."

"Yes, that's the rule."

"But it's better to lie at home in the earth. Anyway, your mother comes to the grave and weeps."

"Of course."

There was a smell of hay and of dung. There were oxen standing with drooping heads by the ship's rail. One, two, three; eight of them! And there was a little horse. Gusev put out his hand to stroke it, but it shook its head, showed its teeth, and tried to bite his sleeve.

"Damned brute . . ." said Gusev angrily.

The two of them, he and the soldier, threaded their way to the head of the ship, then stood at the rail and looked up and down. Overhead deep sky, bright stars, peace and stillness, exactly as at home in the village, below darkness and disorder. The tall waves were resounding, no one could tell why. Whichever wave you looked at each one was trying to rise higher than all the rest and to chase and crush the next one; after it a third as fierce and hideous flew noisily, with a glint of light on its white crest.

The sea has no sense and no pity. If the steamer

been smaller and not made of thick iron, the
s would have crushed it to pieces without the
test compunction, and would have devoured all
people in it with no distinction of saints or sin-

The steamer had the same cruel and mean-
ss expression. This monster with its huge beak
dashing onwards, cutting millions of waves in
ath; it had no fear of the darkness nor the wind,
of space, nor of solitude, caring for nothing,
f the ocean had its people, this monster would
crushed them, too, without distinction of saints
nners.

Where are we now?" asked Gusev.

don't know. We must be in the ocean."

There is no sight of land. . . ."

No indeed! They say we shan't see it for seven
"

he beats his wife for nothing, he does not honour his parents. Everything will go to ruin without me, and father and my old mother will be begging their bread, I shouldn't wonder. But my legs won't bear me, brother, and it's hot here. Let's go to sleep."

V

Gusev went back to the ward and got into his hammock. He was again tormented by a vague craving, and he could not make out what he wanted. There was an oppression on his chest, a throbbing in his head, his mouth was so dry that it was difficult for him to move his tongue. He dozed, and murmured in his sleep, and, worn out with nightmares, his cough, and the stifling heat, towards morning he fell into a sound sleep. He dreamed that they were just taking the bread out of the oven in the barracks and he climbed into the stove and had a steam bath in it, lashing himself with a bunch of birch twigs. He slept for two days, and at midday on the third two sailors came down and carried him out.

He was sewn up in sailcloth and to make him heavier they put with him two iron weights. Sewn up in the sailcloth he looked like a carrot or a radish: broad at the head and narrow at the feet. . . . Before sunset they brought him up to the deck and put him on a plank; one end of the plank lay on the side of the ship, the other on a box, placed on a stool. Round him stood the soldiers and the officers with their caps off.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord . . ." the
st began. " As it was in the beginning, is now,
ever shall be."
Amen," chanted three sailors.
he soldiers and the officers crossed themselves
looked away at the waves. It was strange that
an should be sewn up in sailcloth and should
be flying into the sea. Was it possible that
a thing might happen to anyone?
he priest strewed earth upon Gusev and bowed
n. They sang " Eternal Memory."
he man on watch duty tilted up the end of the
k, Gusev slid off and flew head foremost, turned
mersault in the air and splashed into the sea.
vas covered with foam and for a moment looked
nough he were wrapped in lace, but the minute
ed and he disappeared in the waves.

no show of interest, as though it did not notice him, and sank down upon its back, then it turned belly upwards, basking in the warm, transparent water and languidly opened its jaws with two rows of teeth. The harbour pilots are delighted, they stop to see what will come next. After playing a little with the body the shark nonchalantly puts its jaws under it, cautiously touches it with its teeth, and the sail-cloth is rent its full length from head to foot; one of the weights falls out and frightens the harbour pilots, and striking the shark on the ribs goes rapidly to the bottom.

Overhead at this time the clouds are massed together on the side where the sun is setting; one cloud like a triumphal arch, another like a lion, a third like a pair of scissors. . . . From behind the clouds a broad, green shaft of light pierces through and stretches to the middle of the sky; a little later another, violet-coloured, lies beside it; next that, one of gold, then one rose-coloured. . . . The sky turns a soft lilac. Looking at this gorgeous, enchanted sky, at first the ocean scowls, but soon it, too, takes tender, joyous, passionate colours for which it is hard to find a name in human speech.

THE STUDENT

THE STUDENT

At first the weather was fine and still. The thrushes were calling, and in the swamps close by something alive droned pitifully with a sound like blowing into an empty bottle. A snipe flew by, and the shot aimed at it rang out with a gay, resounding note in the spring air. But when it began to get dark in the forest a cold, penetrating wind blew inappropriately from the east, and everything sank into silence. Needles of ice stretched across the pools, and it felt cheerless, remote, and lonely in the forest. There was a whiff of winter.

Ivan Velikopolsky, the son of a sacristan, and a student of the clerical academy, returning home from shooting, walked all the time by the path in the water-side meadow. His fingers were numb and his face was burning with the wind. It seemed to him that the cold that had suddenly come on had destroyed the order and harmony of things, that nature itself felt ill at ease, and that was why the evening darkness was falling more rapidly than usual. All around it was deserted and peculiarly gloomy. The only light was one gleaming in the widows' gardens near the river; the village, over three miles away, and everything in the distance all round was plunged in the cold evening mist. The student remembered that, as he went out from the house, his mother was

sitting barefoot on the floor in the entry, cleaning the samovar, while his father lay on the stove coughing; as it was Good Friday nothing had been cooked, and the student was terribly hungry. And now, shrinking from the cold, he thought that just such a wind had blown in the days of Rurik and in the time of Ivan the Terrible and Peter, and in their time there had been just the same desperate poverty and hunger, the same thatched roofs with holes in them, ignorance, misery, the same desolation around, the same darkness, the same feeling of oppression — all these had existed, did exist, and would exist, and the lapse of a thousand years would make life no better. And he did not want to go home.

The gardens were called the widows' because they were kept by two widows, mother and daughter. A camp fire was burning brightly with a crackling sound, throwing out light far around on the ploughed earth. The widow Vasilisa, a tall, fat old woman in a man's coat, was standing by and looking thoughtfully into the fire; her daughter Lukerya, a little pock-marked woman with a stupid-looking face, was sitting on the ground, washing a caldron and spoons. Apparently they had just had supper. There was a sound of men's voices; it was the labourers watering their horses at the river.

"Here you have winter back again," said the student, going up to the camp fire. "Good evening."

Vasilisa started, but at once recognized him and smiled cordially.

"I did not know you; God bless you," she said. "You'll be rich."

They talked. Vasilisa, a woman of experience, who had been in service with the gentry, first as a wet-nurse, afterwards as a children's nurse, expressed herself with refinement, and a soft, sedate smile never left her face; her daughter Lukerya, a village peasant woman, who had been crushed by her husband, simply screwed up her eyes at the student and said nothing, and she had a strange expression like that of a deaf mute.

"At just such a fire the Apostle Peter warmed himself," said the student, stretching out his hands to the fire, "so it must have been cold then, too. Ah, what a terrible night it must have been, granny! An utterly dismal long night!"

He looked round at the darkness, shook his head abruptly and asked:

"No doubt you have been at the reading of the Twelve Gospels?"

"Yes, I have," answered Vasilisa.

"If you remember at the Last Supper Peter said to Jesus, 'I am ready to go with Thee into darkness and unto death.' And our Lord answered him thus: 'I say unto thee, Peter, before the cock croweth thou wilt have denied Me thrice.' After the supper Jesus went through the agony of death in the garden and prayed, and poor Peter was weary in spirit and faint, his eyelids were heavy and he could not struggle against sleep. He fell asleep. Then you heard how Judas the same night kissed Jesus and betrayed Him to His tormentors. They took Him bound to the high priest and beat Him, while Peter, exhausted, worn out with misery and alarm, hardly awake, you

know, feeling that something awful was just going to happen on earth, followed behind. . . . He loved Jesus passionately, intensely, and now he saw from far off how He was beaten. . . ."

Lukerya left the spoons and fixed an immovable stare upon the student.

"They came to the high priest's," he went on; "they began to question Jesus, and meantime the labourers made a fire in the yard as it was cold, and warmed themselves. Peter, too, stood with them near the fire and warmed himself as I am doing. A woman, seeing him, said: 'He was with Jesus, too'— that is as much as to say that he, too, should be taken to be questioned. And all the labourers that were standing near the fire must have looked sourly and suspiciously at him, because he was confused and said: 'I don't know Him.' A little while after again someone recognized him as one of Jesus' disciples and said: 'Thou, too, art one of them,' but again he denied it. And for the third time someone turned to him: 'Why, did I not see thee with Him in the garden to-day?' For the third time he denied it. And immediately after that time the cock crowed, and Peter, looking from afar off at Jesus, remembered the words He had said to him in the evening. . . . He remembered, he came to himself, went out of the yard and wept bitterly — bitterly. In the Gospel it is written: 'He went out and wept bitterly.' I imagine it: the still, still, dark, dark garden, and in the stillness, faintly audible, smothered sobbing. . . ."

The student sighed and sank into thought. Still

smiling, Vasilisa suddenly gave a gulp, big tears flowed freely down her cheeks, and she screened her face from the fire with her sleeve as though ashamed of her tears, and Lukerya, staring immovably at the student, flushed crimson, and her expression became strained and heavy like that of someone enduring intense pain.

The labourers came back from the river, and one of them riding a horse was quite near, and the light from the fire quivered upon him. The student said good-night to the widows and went on. And again the darkness was about him and his fingers began to be numb. A cruel wind was blowing, winter really had come back and it did not feel as though Easter would be the day after to-morrow.

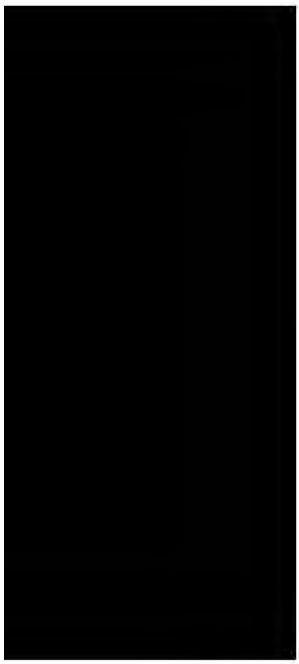
Now the student was thinking about Vasilisa: since she had shed tears all that had happened to Peter the night before the Crucifixion must have some relation to her. . . .

He looked round. The solitary light was still gleaming in the darkness and no figures could be seen near it now. The student thought again that if Vasilisa had shed tears, and her daughter had been troubled, it was evident that what he had just been telling them about, which had happened nineteen centuries ago, had a relation to the present — to both women, to the desolate village, to himself, to all people. The old woman had wept, not because he could tell the story touchingly, but because Peter was near to her, because her whole being was interested in what was passing in Peter's soul.

And joy suddenly stirred in his soul, and he even

arterwards, mounting
and towards the west
lay a narrow streak
and beauty which had
garden and in the yar
ued without interrupt
dently always been the
in all earthly life, ind
health, vigour — he w
inexpressible sweet ex
known mysterious hap
little by little, and lif
marvellous, and full o

IN THE RAVINE



IN THE RAVINE

I

THE village of Ukleevo lay in a ravine so that only the belfry and the chimneys of the printed cottons factories could be seen from the high road and the railway-station. When visitors asked what village this was, they were told:

"That's the village where the deacon ate all the caviare at the funeral."

It had happened at the dinner at the funeral of Kostukov that the old deacon saw among the savouries some large-grained caviare and began eating it greedily; people nudged him, tugged at his arm, but he seemed petrified with enjoyment: felt nothing, and only went on eating. He ate up all the caviare, and there were four pounds in the jar. And years had passed since then, the deacon had long been dead, but the caviare was still remembered. Whether life was so poor here or people had not been clever enough to notice anything but that unimportant incident that had occurred ten years before, anyway the people had nothing else to tell about the village Ukleevo.

The village was never free from fever, and there was boggy mud there even in the summer, especially under the fences over which hung old willow-trees

that gave deep shade. Here there was always a smell from the factory refuse and the acetic acid which was used in the finishing of the cotton print.

The three cotton factories and the tanyard were not in the village itself, but a little way off. They were small factories, and not more than four hundred workmen were employed in all of them. The tanyard often made the water in the little river stink; the refuse contaminated the meadows, the peasants' cattle suffered from Siberian plague, and orders were given that the factory should be closed. It was considered to be closed, but went on working in secret with the connivance of the local police officer and the district doctor, who was paid ten roubles a month by the owner. In the whole village there were only two decent houses built of brick with iron roofs; one of them was the local court, in the other, a two-storied house just opposite the church, there lived a shopkeeper from Epifan called Grigory Petrovitch Tsybukin.

Grigory kept a grocer's shop, but that was only for appearance' sake: in reality he sold vodka, cattle, hides, grain, and pigs; he traded in anything that came to hand, and when, for instance, magpies were wanted abroad for ladies' hats, he made some thirty kopecks on every pair of birds; he bought timber for felling, lent money at interest, and altogether was a sharp old man, full of resources.

He had two sons. The elder, Anisim, was in the police in the detective department and was rarely at home. The younger, Stepan, had gone in for trade and helped his father: but no great help was

expected from him as he was weak in health and deaf; his wife Aksinya, a handsome woman with a good figure, who wore a hat and carried a parasol on holidays, got up early and went to bed late, and ran about all day long, picking up her skirts and jingling her keys, going from the granary to the cellar and from there to the shop, and old Tsybukin looked at her good-humouredly while his eyes glowed, and at such moments he regretted she had not been married to his elder son instead of to the younger one, who was deaf, and who evidently knew very little about female beauty.

The old man had always an inclination for family life, and he loved his family more than anything on earth, especially his elder son, the detective, and his daughter-in-law. Aksinya had no sooner married the deaf son than she began to display an extraordinary gift for business, and knew who could be allowed to run up a bill and who could not: she kept the keys and would not trust them even to her husband; she kept the accounts by means of the reckoning beads, looked at the horses' teeth like a peasant, and was always laughing or shouting; and whatever she did or said the old man was simply delighted and muttered:

"Well done, daughter-in-law! You are a smart wench!"

He was a widower, but a year after his son's marriage he could not resist getting married himself. A girl was found for him, living twenty miles from Ukleevo, called Varvara Nikolaevna, no longer quite young, but good-looking, comely, and

ging to a decent family. As soon as she was lled into the upper-storey room everything in ouse seemed to brighten up as though new glass been put into all the windows. The lamps ned before the ikons, the tables were covered snow-white cloths, flowers with red buds made appearance in the windows and in the front en, and at dinner, instead of eating from a single , each person had a separate plate set for him. ara Nikolaevna had a pleasant, friendly smile, t seemed as though the whole house were smil- too. Beggars and pilgrims, male and female, n to come into the yard, a thing which had r happened in the past; the plaintive sing-song s of the Ukleevo peasant women and the apolo- coughs of weak, seedy-looking men, who had dismissed from the factory for drunkenness

And the next day the deaf man, running across the yard, called to her:

"If there is anything you want, mother, take it."

There was something new, something gay and light-hearted in her giving of alms, just as there was in the lamps before the ikons and in the red flowers. When at Carnival or at the church festival, which lasted for three days, they sold the peasants tainted salt meat, smelling so strong it was hard to stand near the tub of it, and took scythes, caps, and their wives' kerchiefs in pledge from the drunken men; when the factory hands stupefied with bad vodka lay rolling in the mud, and sin seemed to hover thick like a fog in the air, then it was a relief to think that up there in the house there was a gentle, neatly dressed woman who had nothing to do with salt meat or vodka; her charity had in those burdensome, murky days the effect of a safety valve in a machine.

The days in Tsybukin's house were spent in business cares. Before the sun had risen in the morning Aksinya was panting and puffing as she washed in the outer room, and the samovar was boiling in the kitchen with a hum that boded no good. Old Grigory Petrovitch, dressed in a long black coat, cotton breeches and shiny top boots, looking a dapper little figure, walked about the rooms, tapping with his little heels like the father-in-law in a well-known song. The shop was opened. When it was daylight a racing droshky was brought up to the front door and the old man got jauntily on to it, pulling his big cap down to his ears; and, looking at him,

ıe would have said he was fifty-six. His wife daughter-in-law saw him off, and at such times he had on a good, clean coat, and had in the ıky a huge black horse that had cost three hun- roubles, the old man did not like the peasants to up to him with their complaints and petitions; ıted the peasants and disdained them, and if he some peasants waiting at the gate, he would angrily:

Why are you standing there? Go further off."

if it were a beggar, he would say:

God will provide!"

e used to drive off on business; his wife, in a dress and a black apron, tidied the rooms or ed in the kitchen. Aksinya attended to the and from the yard could be heard the clink of s and of money, her laughter and loud talk

beetles bred there. The elder of the rural district had had little education and wrote every word in the official documents in capitals. But when the telephone was spoiled he said:

"Yes, now we shall be badly off without a telephone."

The Hrymin Seniors were continually at law with the Juniors, and sometimes the Juniors quarrelled among themselves and began going to law, and their factory did not work for a month or two till they were reconciled again, and this was an entertainment for the people of Ukleevo, as there was a great deal of talk and gossip on the occasion of each quarrel. On holidays Kostukov and the Juniors used to get up races, used to dash about Ukleevo and run over calves. Aksinya, rustling her starched petticoats, used to promenade in a low-necked dress up and down the street near her shop; the Juniors used to snatch her up and carry her off as though by force. Then old Tsybukin would drive out to show his new horse and take Varvara with him.

In the evening, after the races, when people were going to bed, an expensive concertina was played in the Juniors' yard and, if it were a moonlight night, those sounds sent a thrill of delight to the heart, and Ukleevo no longer seemed a wretched hole.

II

The elder son Anisim came home very rarely, only on great holidays, but he often sent by a returning villager presents and letters written in very

writing by some other hand, always on a sheet
olscap in the form of a petition. The letters
full of expressions that Anisim never made use
conversation: "Dear papa and mamma, I
you a pound of flower tea for the satisfaction
ur physical needs."
the bottom of every letter was scratched, as
gh with a broken pen: "Anisim Tsybukin," and
in the same excellent hand: "Agent."
he letters were read aloud several times, and
ld father, touched, red with emotion, would say:
Here he did not care to stay at home, he has
in for an intellectual line. Well, let him!
y man to his own job!"
happened just before Carnival there was a
y storm of rain mixed with hail; the old man
Varvara went to the window to look at it, and

the same sly and mysterious expression as though they were conspirators.

It was decided to marry Anisim.

"Oh, tut, tut . . . the younger brother has been married long ago," said Varvara, "and you are still without a helpmate like a cock at a fair. What is the meaning of it? Tut, tut, you will be married, please God, then as you choose — you will go into the service and your wife will remain here at home to help us. There is no order in your life, young man, and I see you have forgotten how to live properly. Tut, tut, it's the same trouble with all you townspeople."

When the Tsybukins married, the most handsome girls were chosen as brides for them as rich men. For Anisim, too, they found a handsome one. He was himself of an uninteresting and inconspicuous appearance; of a feeble, sickly build and short stature; he had full, puffy cheeks which looked as though he were blowing them out; his eyes looked with a keen, unblinking stare; his beard was red and scanty, and when he was thinking he always put it into his mouth and bit it; moreover he often drank too much, and that was noticeable from his face and his walk. But when he was informed that they had found a very beautiful bride for him, he said:

"Oh well, I am not a fright myself. All of us Tsybukins are handsome, I may say."

The village of Torguevo was near the town. Half of it had lately been incorporated into the town, the other half remained a village. In the first — the town half — there was a widow living in

own little house; she had a sister living with her was quite poor and went out to work by the day, his sister had a daughter called Lipa, a girl who out to work, too. People in Torguevo were dy talking about Lipa's good looks, but her ter- poverty put everyone off; people opined that widower or elderly man would marry her re- less of her poverty, or would perhaps take her mself without marriage, and that her mother d get enough to eat living with her. Varvara l about Lipa from the matchmakers, and she e over to Torguevo.

hen a visit of inspection was arranged at the s, with lunch and wine all in due order, and wore a new pink dress made on purpose for occasion, and a crimson ribbon like a flame ned in her hair. She was pale-faced, thin, and

Lipa stood in the doorway and looked as though she would say: "Do with me as you will, I trust you," while her mother Praskovya the work-woman hid herself in the kitchen numb with shyness. At one time in her youth a merchant whose floors she was scrubbing stamped at her in a rage; she went chill with terror and there always was a feeling of fear at the bottom of her heart. When she was frightened her arms and legs trembled and her cheeks twitched. Sitting in the kitchen she tried to hear what the visitors were saying, and she kept crossing herself, pressing her fingers to her forehead, and gazing at the ikons. Anisim, slightly drunk, opened the door into the kitchen and said in a free-and-easy way:

"Why are you sitting in here, precious mamma? We are dull without you."

And Praskovya, overcome with timidity, pressing her hands to her lean, wasted bosom, said:

"Oh, not at all. . . . It's very kind of you."

After the visit of inspection the wedding day was fixed. Then Anisim walked about the rooms at home whistling, or suddenly thinking of something, would fall to brooding and would look at the floor fixedly, silently, as though he would probe to the depths of the earth. He expressed neither pleasure that he was to be married, married so soon, on Low Sunday, nor a desire to see his bride, but simply went on whistling. And it was evident he was only getting married because his father and stepmother wished him to, and because it was the custom in the village to marry the son in order to have a woman

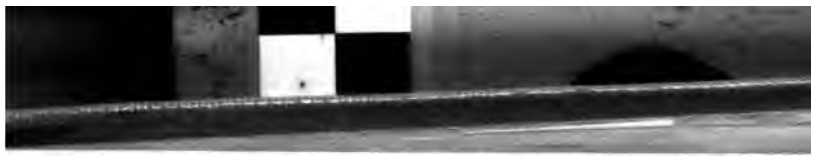
to help in the house. When he went away he seemed in no haste, and behaved altogether not as he had done on previous visits — was particularly free and easy, and talked inappropriately.

III

In the village Shikalovo lived two dressmakers, sisters, belonging to the Flagellant sect. The new clothes for the wedding were ordered from them, and they often came to try them on, and stayed a long while drinking tea. They were making Varvara a brown dress with black lace and bugles on it, and Aksinya a light green dress with a yellow front, with a train. When the dressmakers had finished their work Tsybukin paid them not in money but in goods from the shop, and they went away depressed, carrying parcels of tallow candles and tins of sardines which they did not in the least need, and when they got out of the village into the open country they sat down on a hillock and cried.

Anisim arrived three days before the wedding, rigged out in new clothes from top to toe. He had dazzling india-rubber goloshes, and instead of a cravat wore a red cord with little balls on it, and over his shoulder he had hung an overcoat, also new, without putting his arms into the sleeves.

After crossing himself sedately before the ikon, he greeted his father and gave him ten silver roubles and ten half-roubles; to Varvara he gave as much, and to Aksinya twenty quarter-roubles. The chief charm of the present lay in the fact that all the



coins, as though carefully matched, were new and glittered in the sun. Trying to seem grave and sedate he pursed up his face and puffed out his cheeks, and he smelt of spirits. Probably he had visited the refreshment bar at every station. And again there was a free-and-easiness about the man — something superfluous and out of place. Then Anisim had lunch and drank tea with the old man, and Varvara turned the new coins over in her hand and inquired about villagers who had gone to live in the town.

"They are all right, thank God, they get on quite well," said Anisim. "Only something has happened to Ivan Yegorov: his old wife Sofya Nikiforovna is dead. From consumption. They ordered the memorial dinner for the peace of her soul at the confectioner's at two and a half roubles a head. And there was real wine. Those who were peasants from our village — they paid two and a half roubles for them, too. They ate nothing, as though a peasant would understand sauce!"

"Two and a half," said his father, shaking his head.

"Well, it's not like the country there, you go into a restaurant to have a snack of something, you ask for one thing and another, others join till there is a party of us, one has a drink — and before you know where you are it is daylight and you've three or four roubles each to pay. And when one is with Samorodov he likes to have coffee with brandy in it after everything, and brandy is sixty kopecks for a little glass."

"And he is making it all up," said the old man enthusiastically; "he is making it all up, lying!"

"I am always with Samorodov now. It is Samorodov who writes my letters to you. He writes splendidly. And if I were to tell you, mamma," Anisim went on gaily, addressing Varvara, "the sort of fellow that Samorodov is, you would not believe me. We call him Muhtar, because he is black like an Armenian. I can see through him, I know all his affairs like the five fingers of my hand, and he feels that, and he always follows me about, we are regular inseparables. He seems not to like it in a way, but he can't get on without me. Where I go he goes. I have a correct, trustworthy eye, mamma. One sees a peasant selling a shirt in the market place. 'Stay, that shirt's stolen.' And really it turns out it is so: the shirt was a stolen one."

"What do you tell from?" asked Varvara.

"Not from anything, I have just an eye for it. I know nothing about the shirt, only for some reason I seem drawn to it: it's stolen, and that's all I can say. Among us detectives it's come to their saying, 'Oh, Anisim has gone to shoot snipe!' That means looking for stolen goods. Yes. . . . Anybody can steal, but it is another thing to keep! The earth is wide, but there is nowhere to hide stolen goods."

"In our village a ram and two ewes were carried off last week," said Varvara, and she heaved a sigh, "and there is no one to try and find them. . . . Oh, tut, tut. . . ."

"Well, I might have a try. I don't mind."

The day of the wedding arrived. It was a cool but bright, cheerful April day. People were driving about Ukleevo from early morning with pairs or teams of three horses decked with many-coloured ribbons on their yokes and manes, with a jingle of bells. The rooks, disturbed by this activity, were cawing noisily in the willows, and the starlings sang their loudest unceasingly as though rejoicing that there was a wedding at the Tsybukins'.

Indoors the tables were already covered with long fish, smoked hams, stuffed fowls, boxes of sprats, pickled savouries of various sorts, and a number of bottles of vodka and wine; there was a smell of smoked sausage and of sour tinned lobster. Old Tsybukin walked about near the tables, tapping with his heels and sharpening the knives against each other. They kept calling Varvara and asking for things, and she was constantly with a distracted face running breathlessly into the kitchen, where the man cook from Kostukov's and the woman cook from Hrymin Juniors' had been at work since early morning. Aksinya, with her hair curled, in her stays without her dress on, in new creaky boots, flew about the yard like a whirlwind showing glimpses of her bare knees and bosom.

It was noisy, there was a sound of scolding and oaths; passers-by stopped at the wide-open gates, and in everything there was a feeling that something extraordinary was happening.

"They have gone for the bride!"

The bells began jingling and died away far beyond the village. . . . Between two and three o'clock

e ran up: again there was a jingling of bells: were bringing the bride! The church was full, andelabra were lighted, the choir were singing music books as old Tsybukin had wished it. glare of the lights and the bright coloured es dazzled Lipa; she felt as though the singers their loud voices were hitting her on the head a hammer. Her boots and the stays, which ad put on for the first time in her life, pinched and her face looked as though she had only just to herself after fainting; she gazed about with- nderstanding. Anisim, in his black coat with l cord instead of a tie, stared at the same spot n thought, and when the singers shouted loudly rriedly crossed himself. He felt touched and sed to weep. This church was familiar to him earliest childhood; at one time his dead mother

from them or setting them right was so beyond hope that it seemed incongruous even to ask forgiveness. But he did ask forgiveness, and even gave a loud sob, but no one took any notice of that, since they all supposed he had had a drop too much.

There was a sound of a fretful childish wail:

"Take me away, mamma darling!"

"Quiet there!" cried the priest.

When they returned from the church people ran after them; there were crowds, too, round the shop, round the gates, and in the yard under the windows. The peasant women came in to sing songs of congratulation to them. The young couple had scarcely crossed the threshold when the singers, who were already standing in the outer room with their music books, broke into a loud chant at the top of their voices; a band ordered expressly from the town began playing. Foaming Don wine was brought in tall wine-glasses, and Elizarov, a carpenter who did jobs by contract, a tall, gaunt old man with eyebrows so bushy that his eyes could scarcely be seen, said, addressing the happy pair:

"Anisim and you, my child, love one another, live in God's way, little children, and the Heavenly Mother will not abandon you."

He leaned his face on the old father's shoulder and gave a sob.

"Grigory Petrovitch, let us weep, let us weep with joy!" he said in a thin voice, and then at once burst out laughing in a loud bass guffaw. "Ho-ho-ho! This is a fine daughter-in-law for you too! Every-

thing is in its place in her; all runs smoothly, no creaking, the mechanism works well, lots of screws in it."

He was a native of the Yegoryevsky district, but had worked in the factories in Ukleevo and the neighborhood from his youth up, and had made it his home. He had been a familiar figure for years as old and gaunt and lanky as now, and for years he had been nicknamed "Crutch." Perhaps because he had been for forty years occupied in repairing the factory machinery he judged everybody and everything by its soundness or its need of repair. And before sitting down to the table he tried several chairs to see whether they were solid, and he touched the smoked fish also.

After the Don wine, they all sat down to the table. The visitors talked, moving their chairs. The singers were singing in the outer room. The band was playing, and at the same time the peasant women in the yard were singing their songs all in chorus — and there was an awful, wild medley of sounds which made one giddy.

Crutch turned round in his chair and prodded his neighbours with his elbows, prevented people from talking, and laughed and cried alternately.

"Little children, little children, little children," he muttered rapidly. ."Aksinya my dear, Varvara darling, we will live all in peace and harmony, my dear little axes. . . ."

He drank little and was now only drunk from one glass of English bitters. The revolting bitters, made from nobody knows what, intoxicated every-

one who drank it as though it had stunned them. Their tongues began to falter.

The local clergy, the clerks from the factories with their wives, the tradesmen and tavern-keepers from the other villages were present. The clerk and the elder of the rural district who had served together for fourteen years, and who had during all that time never signed a single document for anybody nor let a single person out of the local court without deceiving or insulting him, were sitting now side by side, both fat and well-fed, and it seemed as though they were so saturated in injustice and falsehood that even the skin of their faces was somehow peculiar, fraudulent. The clerk's wife, a thin woman with a squint, had brought all her children with her, and like a bird of prey looked aslant at the plates and snatched anything she could get hold of to put in her own or her children's pockets.

Lipa sat as though turned to stone, still with the same expression as in church. Anisim had not said a single word to her since he had made her acquaintance, so that he did not yet know the sound of her voice; and now, sitting beside her, he remained mute and went on drinking bitters, and when he got drunk he began talking to the aunt who was sitting opposite:

"I have a friend called Samorodov. A peculiar man. He is by rank an honorary citizen, and he can talk. But I know him through and through, auntie, and he feels it. Pray join me in drinking to the health of Samorodov, auntie!"

Varvara, worn out and distracted, walked round

ble pressing the guests to eat, and was evidently
ed that there were so many dishes and that
thing was so lavish — no one could disparage
now. The sun set, but the dinner went on:
guests were beyond knowing what they were
g or drinking, it was impossible to distinguish
was said, and only from time to time when the
subsided some peasant woman could be heard
ing:

They have sucked the blood out of us, the
ds; a pest on them!"

the evening they danced to the band. The
nin Juniors came, bringing their wine, and one
em, when dancing a quadrille, held a bottle in
hand and a wineglass in his mouth, and that
everyone laugh. In the middle of the quad-
they suddenly crooked their knees and danced

saw nothing, he did not look at her; he sat with his legs crossed and ate nuts, cracking them so loudly that it sounded like pistol shots.

But, behold, old Tsybukin himself walked into the middle of the room and waved his handkerchief as a sign that he, too, wanted to dance the Russian dance, and all over the house and from the crowd in the yard rose a roar of approbation:

"*He's* going to dance! *He* himself!"

Varvara danced, but the old man only waved his handkerchief and kicked up his heels, but the people in the yard, propped against one another, peeping in at the windows, were in raptures, and for the moment forgave him everything — his wealth and the wrongs he had done them.

"Well done, Grigory Petrovitch!" was heard in the crowd. "That's right, do your best! You can still play your part! Ha-ha!"

It was kept up till late, till two o'clock in the morning. Anisim, staggering, went to take leave of the singers and bandsmen, and gave each of them a new half-rouble. His father, who was not staggering but still seemed to be standing on one leg, saw his guests off, and said to each of them:

"The wedding has cost two thousand."

As the party was breaking up, someone took the Shikalovo innkeeper's good coat instead of his own old one, and Anisim suddenly flew into a rage and began shouting:

"Stop, I'll find it at once; I know who stole it, stop."

He ran out into the street and pursued someone.

was caught, brought back home and shoved,
ken, red with anger, and wet, into the room
e the aunt was undressing Lipa, and was
d in.

IV

ve days had passed. Anisim, who was prepar-
o go, went upstairs to say good-bye to Var-
All the lamps were burning before the ikons,
was a smell of incense, while she sat at the
ow knitting a stocking of red wool.
You have not stayed with us long," she said.
u've been dull, I dare say. Oh, tut, tut. . . .
ive comfortably; we have plenty of everything.
elebrated your wedding properly, in good style;
father says it came to two thousand. In fact

Do you suppose in the next world they'll consider what job you have been put to? God's judgment is just."

"Of course no one will consider," said Anisim, and he heaved a sigh. "There is no God, anyway, you know, mamma, so what considering can there be?"

Varvara looked at him with surprise, burst out laughing, and clasped her hands. Perhaps because she was so genuinely surprised at his words and looked at him as though he were a queer person, he was confused.

"Perhaps there is a God, only there is no faith. When I was being married I was not myself. Just as you may take an egg from under a hen and there is a chicken chirping in it, so my conscience was beginning to chirp in me, and while I was being married I thought all the time there was a God! But when I left the church it was nothing. And indeed, how can I tell whether there is a God or not? We are not taught right from childhood, and while the babe is still at his mother's breast he is only taught 'every man to his own job.' Father does not believe in God, either. You were saying that Guntorev had some sheep stolen. . . . I have found them; it was a peasant at Shikalovo stole them; he stole them, but father's got the fleeces . . . so that's all his faith amounts to."

Anisim winked and wagged his head.

"The elder does not believe in God, either," he went on. "And the clerk and the deacon, too. And as for their going to church and keeping the

, that is simply to prevent people talking ill of , and in case it really may be true that there e a Day of Judgment. Nowadays people say the end of the world has come because people grown weaker, do not honour their parents, so on. All that is nonsense. My idea, mam- s that all our trouble is because there is so little ience in people. I see through things, mamma, I understand. If a man has a stolen shirt I t. A man sits in a tavern and you fancy he is king tea and no more, but to me the tea is neither nor there; I see further, he has no conscience. can go about the whole day and not meet one with a conscience. And the whole reason is they don't know whether there is a God or not.

Well, good-bye, mamma, keep alive and well, remember evil against me."

"Yes, she is rather a queer one," said Anisim, and he gave a sigh. "She does not understand anything, she never speaks. She is very young, let her grow up."

A tall, sleek white stallion was already standing at the front door, harnessed to the chaise.

Old Tsybukin jumped in jauntily with a run and took the reins. Anisim kissed Varvara, Aksinya, and his brother. On the steps Lipa, too, was standing; she was standing motionless, looking away, and it seemed as though she had not come to see him off but just by chance for some unknown reason. Anisim went up to her and just touched her cheek with his lips.

"Good-bye," he said.

And without looking at him she gave a strange smile; her face began to quiver, and everyone for some reason felt sorry for her. Anisim, too, leaped into the chaise with a bound and put his arms jauntily akimbo, for he considered himself a good-looking fellow.

When they drove up out of the ravine Anisim kept looking back towards the village. It was a warm, bright day. The cattle were being driven out for the first time, and the peasant girls and women were walking by the herd in their holiday dresses. The dun-coloured bull bellowed, glad to be free, and pawed the ground with his forefeet. On all sides, above and below, the larks were singing. Anisim looked round at the elegant white church — it had only lately been whitewashed — and he thought how he had been praying in it five days before; he looked

l at the school with its green roof, at the little
in which he used once to bathe and catch fish,
here was a stir of joy in his heart, and he
d that walls might rise up from the ground
prevent him from going further, and that he
t be left with nothing but the past.

the station they went to the refreshment room
drank a glass of sherry each. His father felt
pocket for his purse to pay.

will stand treat," said Anisim. The old man,
ed and delighted, slapped him on the shoulder,
winked to the waiter as much as to say, "See
a fine son I have got."

You ought to stay at home in the business,
m," he said; "you would be worth any price to
I would shower gold on you from head to
my son."

An old labourer who was passing by the door shook his head and cleared his throat.

"Yes, indeed, your daughters-in-law, Grigory Petrovitch, are a blessing from God," he said. "Not women, but treasures!"

V

On Friday the 8th of July, Elizarov, nicknamed Crutch, and Lipa were returning from the village of Kazanskoe, where they had been to a service on the occasion of a church holiday in the honour of the Holy Mother of Kazan. A good distance after them walked Lipa's mother Praskovya, who always fell behind, as she was ill and short of breath. It was drawing towards evening.

"A-a-a . . ." said Crutch, wondering as he listened to Lipa. "A-a! . . . We-ell!"

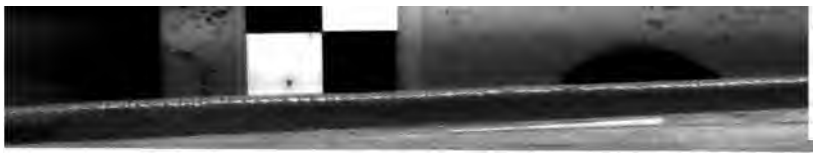
"I am very fond of jam, Ilya Makaritch," said Lipa. "I sit down in my little corner and drink tea and eat jam. Or I drink it with Varvara Nikolaevna, and she tells some story full of feeling. We have a lot of jam — four jars. 'Have some, Lipa; eat as much as you like.'"

"A-a-a, four jars!"

"They live very well. We have white bread with our tea; and meat, too, as much as one wants. They live very well, only I am frightened with them, Ilya Makaritch. Oh, oh, how frightened I am!"

"Why are you frightened, child?" asked Crutch, and he looked back to see how far Praskovya was behind.

To begin with, when the wedding had been cele-
d I was afraid of Anisim Grigoritch. Anisim
oritch did nothing, he didn't ill-treat me, only
he comes near me a cold shiver runs all over
hrough all my bones. And I did not sleep one
, I trembled all over and kept praying to God.
now I am afraid of Aksinya, Ilya Makaritch.
ot that she does anything, she is always laugh-
but sometimes she glances at the window, and
yes are so fierce and there is a gleam of green
em — like the eyes of the sheep in the shed.
Hrymin Juniors are leading her astray: 'Your
nan,' they tell her, 'has a bit of land at Butyo-
a hundred and twenty acres,' they say, 'and
is sand and water there, so you, Aksinya,' they
'build a brickyard there and we will go shares



ened with her, Ilya Makaritch. And the Hrymin Juniors did not go to bed after the wedding, but drove to the town to go to law with each other; and folks do say it is all on account of Aksinya. Two of the brothers have promised to build her a brick-yard, but the third is offended, and the factory has been at a standstill for a month, and my uncle Prohor is without work and goes about from house to house getting crusts. 'Hadn't you better go working on the land or sawing up wood, meanwhile, uncle?' I tell him; 'why disgrace yourself?' 'I've got out of the way of it,' he says; 'I don't know how to do any sort of peasant's work now, Lipinka.' . . ."

They stopped to rest and wait for Praskovya near a copse of young aspen-trees. Elizarov had long been a contractor in a small way, but he kept no horses, going on foot all over the district with nothing but a little bag in which there was bread and onions, and stalking along with big strides, swinging his arms. And it was difficult to walk with him.

At the entrance to the copse stood a milestone. Elizarov touched it; read it. Praskovya reached them out of breath. Her wrinkled and always scared-looking face was beaming with happiness; she had been at church to-day like anyone else, then she had been to the fair and there had drunk pear cider. For her this was unusual, and it even seemed to her now that she had lived for her own pleasure that day for the first time in her life. After resting they all three walked on side by side. The sun had already set, and its beams filtered through the copse,

g a light on the trunks of the trees. There
a faint sound of voices ahead. The Ukleevo
had long before pushed on ahead but had lin-
in the copse, probably gathering mushrooms.
Hey, wenches!" cried Elizarov. "Hey, my
ies!"
ere was a sound of laughter in response.
Crutch is coming! Crutch! The old horse-
n."
d the echo laughed, too. And then the copse
eft behind. The tops of the factory chimneys
into view. The cross on the belfry glittered:
vas the village: "the one at which the deacon
l the caviare at the funeral." Now they were
t home; they only had to go down into the big
e. Lipa and Praskovya, who had been walk-

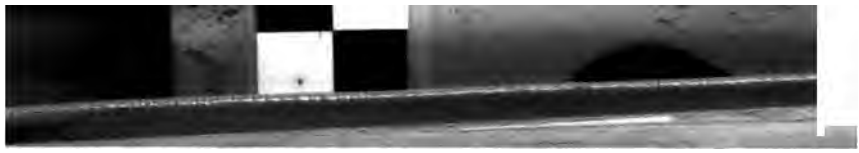
gazing now at the fields, everyone thought, God grant we get the harvest in in time; and everyone felt gay and joyful and anxious at heart.

"Mowers ask a high price nowadays," said Praskovya. "One rouble and forty kopecks a day."

People kept coming and coming from the fair at Kazanskoe: peasant women, factory workers in new caps, beggars, children. . . . Here a cart would drive by stirring up the dust and behind it would run an unsold horse, and it seemed glad it had not been sold; then a cow was led along by the horns, resisting stubbornly; then a cart again, and in it drunken peasants swinging their legs. An old woman led a little boy in a big cap and big boots; the boy was tired out with the heat and the heavy boots which prevented his bending his legs at the knees, but yet blew unceasingly with all his might at a tin trumpet. They had gone down the slope and turned into the street, but the trumpet could still be heard.

"Our factory owners don't seem quite themselves . . ." said Elizarov. "There's trouble. Kostukov is angry with me. 'Too many boards have gone on the cornices.' 'Too many? As many have gone on it as were needed, Vassily Danilitch; I don't eat them with my porridge.' 'How can you speak to me like that?' said he, 'you good-for-nothing blockhead! Don't forget yourself! It was I made you a contractor.' 'That's nothing so wonderful,' said I. 'Even before I was a contractor I used to have tea every day.' 'You are a rascal . . .' he said. I said nothing. 'We are rascals in this world,' thought I, 'and you will be

ls in the next. . . .' Ha-ha-ha! The next
ıe was softer. 'Don't you bear malice against
or my words, Makaritch,' he said. 'If I said
nuch,' says he, 'what of it? I am a merchant
e first guild, your superior — you ought to hold
tongue.' 'You,' said I, 'are a merchant of the
guild and I am a carpenter, that's correct. And
Joseph was a carpenter, too. Ours is a right-
calling and pleasing to God, and if you are
ed to be my superior you are very welcome to
ıssily Danilitch.' And later on, after that con-
tion I mean, I thought: 'Which was the supe-
A merchant of the first guild or a carpen-
The carpenter must be, my child!"
utch thought a minute and added:
Yes, that's how it is, child. He who works,
ho is patient is the superior."



At last they went home again. The mowers were sitting on the ground at the gates near the shop. As a rule the Ukleevo peasants did not go to Tsybukin's to work, and they had to hire strangers, and now in the darkness it seemed as though there were men sitting there with long black beards. The shop was open, and through the doorway they could see the deaf man playing draughts with a boy. The mowers were singing softly, scarcely audibly, or loudly demanding their wages for the previous day, but they were not paid for fear they should go away before to-morrow. Old Tsybukin, with his coat off, was sitting in his waistcoat with Aksinya under the birch-tree, drinking tea; a lamp was burning on the table.

"I say, grandfather," a mower called from outside the gates, as though taunting him, "pay us half anyway! Hey, grandfather."

And at once there was the sound of laughter, and then again they sang hardly audibly. . . . Crutch, too, sat down to have some tea.

"We have been at the fair, you know," he began telling them. "We have had a walk, a very nice walk, my children, praise the Lord. But an unfortunate thing happened: Sashka the blacksmith bought some tobacco and gave the shopman half a rouble to be sure. And the half rouble was a false one"—Crutch went on, and he meant to speak in a whisper, but he spoke in a smothered husky voice which was audible to everyone. "The half-rouble turned out to be a bad one. He was asked where he got it. 'Anisim Tsybukin gave it me,' he said. 'When I

to his wedding,' he said. They called the
inspector, took the man away. . . . Look
Grigory Petrovitch, that nothing comes of it,
lk. . . ."

Gra-ndfather!" the same voice called taunt-
outside the gates. "Gra-andfather!"

silence followed.

Ah, little children, little children, little chil-
. . ." Crutch muttered rapidly, and he got up.
vas overcome with drowsiness. "Well, thank
or the tea, for the sugar, little children. It is
to sleep. I am like a bit of rotten timber now-
s, my beams are crumbling under me. Ho-ho-
I suppose it's time I was dead."

d he gave a gulp. Old Tsybukin did not finish
a but sat on a little, pondering; and his face

talk about it. Harm might come of it. . . . Take away the samovar, put out the light."

Lipa and her mother sitting in the barn saw the lights go out one after the other; only overhead in Varvara's room there were blue and red lamps gleaming, and a feeling of peace, content, and happy ignorance seemed to float down from there. Praskovya could never get used to her daughter's being married to a rich man, and when she came she huddled timidly in the outer room with a deprecating smile on her face, and tea and sugar were sent out to her. And Lipa, too, could not get used to it either, and after her husband had gone away she did not sleep in her bed, but lay down anywhere to sleep, in the kitchen or the barn, and every day she scrubbed the floor or washed the clothes, and felt as though she were hired by the day. And now, on coming back from the service, they drank tea in the kitchen with the cook, then they went into the barn and lay down on the ground between the sledge and the wall. It was dark here and smelt of harness. The lights went out about the house, then they could hear the deaf man shutting up the shop, the mowers settling themselves about the yard to sleep. In the distance at the Hrymin Juniors' they were playing on the expensive concertina. . . . Praskovya and Lipa began to go to sleep.

And when they were awakened by somebody's steps it was bright moonlight; at the entrance of the barn stood Aksinya with her bedding in her arms.

" Maybe it's a bit cooler here," she said; then she

came in and lay down almost in the doorway so that the moonlight fell full upon her.

She did not sleep, but breathed heavily, tossing from side to side with the heat, throwing off almost all the bedclothes. And in the magic moonlight what a beautiful, what a proud animal she was! A little time passed, and then steps were heard again: the old father, white all over, appeared in the doorway.

"Aksinya," he called, "are you here?"

"Well?" she responded angrily.

"I told you just now to throw the money into the well, have you done so?"

"What next, throwing property into the water! I gave them to the mowers. . . ."

"Oh my God!" cried the old man, dumbfounded and alarmed. "Oh my God! you wicked woman. . . ."

He flung up his hands and went out, and he kept saying something as he went away. And a little later Aksinya sat up and sighed heavily with annoyance, then got up and, gathering up her bedclothes in her arms, went out.

"Why did you marry me into this family, mother?" said Lipa.

"One has to be married, daughter. It was not us who ordained it."

And a feeling of inconsolable woe was ready to take possession of them. But it seemed to them that someone was looking down from the height of the heavens, out of the blue from where the stars were seeing everything that was going on in Ukleevo,

watching over them. And however great was wickedness, still the night was calm and beautiful, and still in God's world there is and will be truth and justice as calm and beautiful, and everything on earth is only waiting to be made one with truth and justice, even as the moonlight is blended with the night.

And both, huddling close to one another, fell asleep comforted.

VI

News had come long before that Anisim had been put in prison for coining and passing bad money. Months passed, more than half a year passed, the long winter was over, spring had begun, and everyone in the house and the village had grown used to the fact that Anisim was in prison. And when anyone passed by the house or the shop at night he would remember that Anisim was in prison; and when they rang at the churchyard for some reason, that, too, reminded them that he was in prison awaiting trial.

It seemed as though a shadow had fallen upon the house. The house looked darker, the roof was rustier, the heavy, iron-bound door into the shop, which was painted green, was covered with cracks, or, as the deaf man expressed it, "blisters"; and old Tsybukin seemed to have grown dingy, too. He had given up cutting his hair and beard, and looked shaggy. He no longer sprang jauntily into his chaise, nor shouted to beggars: "God will pro-

" His strength was on the wane, and that vident in everything. People were less afraid n now, and the police officer drew up a formal e against him in the shop though he received gular bribe as before; and three times the old was called up to the town to be tried for illicit ng in spirits, and the case was continually ad- ed owing to the non-appearance of witnesses, ld Tsybukin was worn out with worry.

often went to see his son, hired somebody, d in a petition to somebody else, presented a banner to some church. He presented the gov- of the prison in which Anisim was confined a silver glass stand with a long spoon and the ption: " The soul knows its right measure." There is no one to look after things for us," Varvara. " Tut, tut. . . . You ought to ask

before Lent. It was a tiny, thin, pitiful little baby, and it was strange that it should cry and gaze about and be considered a human being, and even be called Nikifor. He lay in his swinging cradle, and Lipa would walk away towards the door and say, bowing to him:

"Good-day, Nikifor Anisimitch!"

And she would rush at him and kiss him. Then she would walk away to the door, bow again, and say:

'Good-day, Nikifor Anisimitch!"

And he kicked up his little red legs, and his crying was mixed with laughter like the carpenter Elizarov's.

At last the day of the trial was fixed. Tsybukin went away five days before. Then they heard that the peasants called as witnesses had been fetched; their old workman who had received a notice to appear went too.

The trial was on a Thursday. But Sunday had passed, and Tsybukin was still not back, and there was no news. Towards the evening on Tuesday Varvara was sitting at the open window, listening for her husband to come. In the next room Lipa was playing with her baby. She was tossing him up in her arms and saying enthusiastically:

"You will grow up ever so big, ever so big. You will be a peasant, we shall go out to work together! We shall go out to work together!"

"Come, come," said Varvara, offended. "Go out to work, what an idea, you silly girl! He will be a merchant . . .!"

pa sang softly, but a minute later she forgot
gain:
You will grow ever so big, ever so big. You
e a peasant, we'll go out to work together."
There she is at it again!"
pa, with Nikifor in her arms, stood still in the
way and asked:
Why do I love him so much, mamma? Why
feel so sorry for him?" she went on in a quiv-
voice, and her eyes glistened with tears.
ho is he? What is he like? As light as a little
er, as a little crumb, but I love him; I love him
a real person. Here he can do nothing, he
talk, and yet I know what he wants with his
eyes."
rvara was listening; the sound of the evening
coming in to the station reached her. Had
husband come? She did not hear and she did

and in one hand held a bottle and in the other a can, and in her mouth she had some silver coins.

"Where is father?" she asked, lisping.

"At the station," answered the labourer. "'When it gets a little darker,' he said, 'then I shall come.'"

And when it became known all through the household that Anisim was sentenced to penal servitude, the cook in the kitchen suddenly broke into a wail as though at a funeral, imagining that this was demanded by the proprieties:

"There is no one to care for us now you have gone, Anisim Grigoritch, our bright falcon. . . ."

The dogs began barking in alarm. Varvara ran to the window, and rushing about in distress, shouted to the cook with all her might, straining her voice:

"Sto-op, Stepanida, sto-op! Don't harrow us, for Christ's sake!"

They forgot to set the samovar, they could think of nothing. Only Lipa could not make out what it was all about and went on playing with her baby.

When the old father arrived from the station they asked him no questions. He greeted them and walked through all the rooms in silence; he had no supper.

"There was no one to see about things . . ." Varvara began when they were alone. "I said you should have asked some of the gentry, you would not heed me at the time. . . . A petition would . . ."

"I saw to things," said her husband with a wave of his hand. "When Anisim was condemned I

to the gentleman who was defending him. no use now,' he said, 'it's too late'; and Ani- aid the same; it's too late. But all the same came out of the court I made an agreement a lawyer, I paid him something in advance. vait a week and then I will go again. It is as wills."

gain the old man walked through all the rooms, vhen he went back to Varvara he said:

I must be ill. My head's in a sort of . . . fog. houghts are in a maze."

e closed the door that Lipa might not hear, and on softly:

I am unhappy about my money. Do you re- ber on Low Sunday before his wedding Anisim's ing me some new roubles and half-roubles? parcel I put away at the time, but the others I

three roubles, and I keep fancying they are false. And I am frightened. I must be ill."

"There's no denying it, we are all in God's hands. . . . Oh dear, dear . . ." said Varvara, and she shook her head. "You ought to think about this, Grigory Petrovitch: you never know, anything may happen, you are not a young man. See they don't wrong your grandchild when you are dead and gone. Oy, I am afraid they will be unfair to Nikifor! He has as good as no father, his mother's young and foolish . . . you ought to secure something for him, poor little boy, at least the land, Butyokino, Grigory Petrovitch, really! Think it over!" Varvara went on persuading him. "The pretty boy, one is sorry for him! You go to-morrow and make out a deed; why put it off?"

"I'd forgotten about my grandson," said Tsybukin. "I must go and have a look at him. So you say the boy is all right? Well, let him grow up, please God."

He opened the door and, crooking his finger, beckoned to Lipa. She went up to him with the baby in her arms.

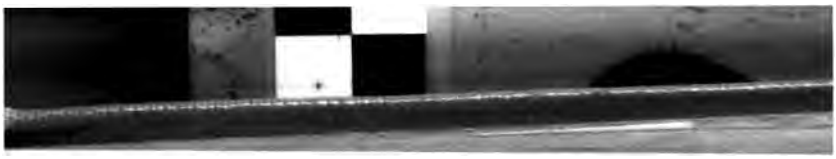
"If there is anything you want, Lipinka, you ask for it," he said. "And eat anything you like, we don't grudge it, so long as it does you good. . . ." He made the sign of the cross over the baby. "And take care of my grandchild. My son is gone, but my grandson is left."

Tears rolled down his cheeks; he gave a sob and went away. Soon afterwards he went to bed and slept soundly after seven sleepless nights.

VII

d Tsybukin went to the town for a short time. one told Aksinya that he had gone to the notary ake his will and that he was leaving Butyokino, ery place where she had set up a brickyard, to for, his grandson. She was informed of this in norning when old Tsybukin and Varvara were g near the steps under the birch-tree, drinking tea. She closed the shop in the front and at ack, gathered together all the keys she had, and them at her father-in-law's feet.

am not going on working for you," she began oud voice, and suddenly broke into sobs. "It s I am not your daughter-in-law, but a servant! ybody's jeering and saying, 'See what a servant



her servant. Give her everything, the convict's wife, and may it choke her! I am going home! Find yourselves some other fool, you damned Herods!"

Tsybukin had never in his life scolded or punished his children, and had never dreamed that one of his family could speak to him rudely or behave disrespectfully; and now he was very much frightened; he ran into the house and there hid behind the cupboard. And Varvara was so much flustered that she could not get up from her seat, and only waved her hands before her as though she were warding off a bee.

"Oh, Holy Saints! what's the meaning of it?" she muttered in horror. "What is she shouting? Oh, dear, dear! . . . People will hear! Hush. Oh, hush!"

"He has given Butyokino to the convict's wife," Aksinya went on bawling. "Give her everything now, I don't want anything from you! Let me alone! You are all a gang of thieves here! I have seen my fill of it, I have had enough! You have robbed folks coming in and going out; you have robbed old and young alike, you brigands! And who has been selling vodka without a licence? And false money? You've filled boxes full of false coins, and now I am no more use!"

A crowd had by now collected at the open gate and was staring into the yard.

"Let the people look," bawled Aksinya. "I will shame you all! You shall burn with shame! You shall grovel at my feet. Hey! Stepan," she

called to the deaf man, "let us go home this minute! Let us go to my father and mother; I don't want to live with convicts. Get ready!"

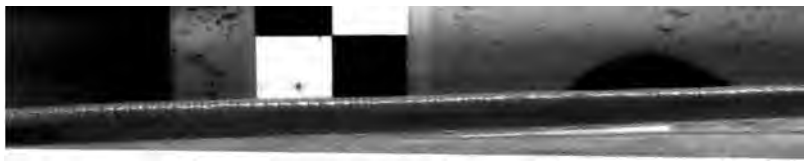
Clothes were hanging on lines stretched across the yard; she snatched off her petticoats and blouses still wet and flung them into the deaf man's arms. Then in her fury she dashed about the yard by the linen, tore down all of it, and what was not hers she threw on the ground and trampled upon.

"Holy Saints, take her away," moaned Varvara. "What a woman! Give her Butyokino! Give it her, for the Lord's sake!"

"Well! Wha-at a woman!" people were saying at the gate. "She's a wo-oman! She's going it — something like!"

Aksinya ran into the kitchen where washing was going on. Lipa was washing alone, the cook had gone to the river to rinse the clothes. Steam was rising from the trough and from the caldron on the side of the stove, and the kitchen was thick and stifling from the steam. On the floor was a heap of unwashed clothes, and Nikifor, kicking up his little red legs, had been put down on a bench near them, so that if he fell he should not hurt himself. Just as Aksinya went in Lipa took the former's chemise out of the heap and put it in the trough, and was just stretching out her hand to a big ladle of boiling water which was standing on the table.

"Give it here," said Aksinya, looking at her with hatred, and snatching the chemise out of the trough; "it is not your business to touch my linen! You



are a convict's wife, and ought to know your place and who you are."

Lipa gazed at her, taken aback, and did not understand, but suddenly she caught the look Aksinya turned upon the child, and at once she understood and went numb all over.

"You've taken my land, so here you are!" Saying this Aksinya snatched up the ladle with the boiling water and flung it over Nikifor.

After this there was heard a scream such as had never been heard before in Ukleevo, and no one would have believed that a little weak creature like Lipa could scream like that. And it was suddenly silent in the yard.

Aksinya walked into the house with her old naïve smile. . . . The deaf man kept moving about the yard with his arms full of linen, then he began hanging it up again, in silence, without haste. And until the cook came back from the river no one ventured to go into the kitchen and see what was there.

VIII

Nikifor was taken to the district hospital, and towards evening he died there. Lipa did not wait for them to come for her, but wrapped the dead baby in its little quilt and carried it home.

The hospital, a new one recently built, with big windows, stood high up on a hill; it was glittering from the setting sun and looked as though it were on fire from inside. There was a little village below. Lipa went down along the road, and before

ing the village sat down by a pond. A woman
ght a horse down to drink and the horse did not
.

What more do you want?" said the woman
softly. "What do you want?"

boy in a red shirt, sitting at the water's edge,
washing his father's boots. And not another
was in sight either in the village or on the hill.
t's not drinking," said Lipa, looking at the
.

hen the woman with the horse and the boy with
oots walked away, and there was no one left
l. The sun went to bed wrapped in cloth of
and purple, and long clouds, red and lilac,
hed across the sky, guarded its slumbers.
where far away a bittern cried, a hollow, mel-
[redacted]

A silver half-moon was shining in the sky; there were many stars. Lipa had no idea how long she sat by the pond, but when she got up and walked on everybody was asleep in the little village, and there was not a single light. It was probably about nine miles' walk home, but she had not the strength, she had not the power to think how to go: the moon gleamed now in front, now on the right, and the same cuckoo kept calling in a voice grown husky, with a chuckle as though gibing at her: "Oy, look out, you'll lose your way!" Lipa walked rapidly; she lost the kerchief from her head . . . she looked at the sky and wondered where her baby's soul was now: was it following her, or floating aloft yonder among the stars and thinking nothing now of his mother? Oh, how lonely it was in the open country at night, in the midst of that singing when one cannot sing oneself; in the midst of the incessant cries of joy when one cannot oneself be joyful, when the moon, which cares not whether it is spring or winter, whether men are alive or dead, looks down as lonely, too. . . . When there is grief in the heart it is hard to be without people. If only her mother, Praskovya, had been with her, or Crutch, or the cook, or some peasant!

"Boo-oo!" cried the bittern. "Boo-oo!"

And suddenly she heard clearly the sound of human speech:

"Put the horses in, Vavila!"

By the wayside a camp fire was burning ahead of her: the flames had died down, there were only red embers. She could hear the horses munching.

In the darkness she could see the outlines of two carts, one with a barrel, the other, a lower one with sacks in it, and the figures of two men; one was leading a horse to put it into the shafts, the other was standing motionless by the fire with his hands behind his back. A dog growled by the carts. The one who was leading the horse stopped and said:

"It seems as though someone were coming along the road."

"Sharik, be quiet!" the other called to the dog.

And from the voice one could tell that the second was an old man. Lipa stopped and said:

"God help you."

The old man went up to her and answered not immediately:

"Good-evening!"

"Your dog does not bite, grandfather?"

"No, come along, he won't touch you."

"I have been at the hospital," said Lipa after a pause. "My little son died there. Here I am carrying him home."

It must have been unpleasant for the old man to hear this, for he moved away and said hurriedly:

"Never mind, my dear. It's God's will. You are very slow, lad," he added, addressing his companion; "look alive!"

"Your yoke's nowhere," said the young man; "it is not to be seen."

"You are a regular Vavila."

The old man picked up an ember, blew on it — only his eyes and nose were lighted up — then, when they had found the yoke, he went with the light to

Lipa and looked at her, and his look expressed compassion and tenderness.

"You are a mother," he said; "every mother grieves for her child."

And he sighed and shook his head as he said it. Vavila threw something on the fire, stamped on it — and at once it was very dark; the vision vanished, and as before there were only the fields, the sky with the stars, and the noise of the birds hindering each other from sleep. And the landrail called, it seemed, in the very place where the fire had been.

But a minute passed, and again she could see the two carts and the old man and lanky Vavila. The carts creaked as they went out on the road.

"Are you holy men?" Lipa asked the old man.

"No. We are from Firsanovo."

"You looked at me just now and my heart was softened. And the young man is so gentle. I thought you must be holy men."

"Are you going far?"

"To Ukleevo."

"Get in, we will give you a lift as far as Kuzmenki, then you go straight on and we turn off to the left."

Vavila got into the cart with the barrel and the old man and Lipa got into the other. They moved at a walking pace, Vavila in front.

"My baby was in torment all day," said Lipa. "He looked at me with his little eyes and said nothing; he wanted to speak and could not. Holy Father, Queen of Heaven! In my grief I kept fall-

ing down on the floor. I stood up and fell down by the bedside. And tell me, grandfather, why a little thing should be tormented before his death? When a grown-up person, a man or woman, are in torment their sins are forgiven, but why a little thing, when he has no sins? Why?"

"Who can tell?" answered the old man.

They drove on for half an hour in silence.

"We can't know everything, how and wherefore," said the old man. "It is ordained for the bird to have not four wings but two because it is able to fly with two; and so it is ordained for man not to know everything but only a half or a quarter. As much as he needs to know so as to live, so much he knows."

"It is better for me to go on foot, grandfather. Now my heart is all of a tremble."

"Never mind, sit still."

The old man yawned and made the sign of the cross over his mouth.

"Never mind," he repeated. "Yours is not the worst of sorrows. Life is long, there will be good and bad to come, there will be everything. Great is mother Russia," he said, and looked round on each side of him. "I have been all over Russia, and I have seen everything in her, and you may believe my words, my dear. There will be good and there will be bad. I went as a delegate from my village to Siberia, and I have been to the Amur River and the Altai Mountains and I settled in Siberia; I worked the land there, then I was homesick for mother Russia and I came back to my native village.

We came back to Russia on foot; and I remember we went on a steamer, and I was thin as thin, all in rags, barefoot, freezing with cold, and gnawing a crust, and a gentleman who was on the steamer — the kingdom of heaven be his if he is dead — looked at me pitifully, and the tears came into his eyes. 'Ah,' he said, 'your bread is black, your days are black. . . .' And when I got home, as the saying is, there was neither stick nor stall; I had a wife, but I left her behind in Siberia, she was buried there. So I am living as a day labourer. And yet I tell you: since then I have had good as well as bad. Here I do not want to die, my dear, I would be glad to live another twenty years; so there has been more of the good. And great is our mother Russia!" and again he gazed to each side and looked round.

"Grandfather," Lipa asked, "when anyone dies, how many days does his soul walk the earth?"

"Who can tell! Ask Vavila here, he has been to school. Now they teach them everything. Vavila!" the old man called to him.

"Yes!"

"Vavila, when anyone dies how long does his soul walk the earth?"

Vavila stopped the horse and only then answered:

"Nine days. My uncle Kirilla died and his soul lived in our hut thirteen days after."

"How do you know?"

"For thirteen days there was a knocking in the stove."

"Well, that's all right. Go on," said the old

cuckoo was cal

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"Ech, Lipa,'
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"And he wa
"Oh, dear, dear.
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and after it the g
deal, and with s

"Don't grieve for the babe. For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And only when they had all separated Lipa realized fully that there was no Nikifor and never would be, she realized it and broke into sobs. And she did not know what room to go into to sob, for she felt that now that her child was dead there was no place for her in the house, that she had no reason to be here, that she was in the way; and the others felt it, too.

"Now what are you bellowing for?" Aksinya shouted, suddenly appearing in the doorway; in honour of the funeral she was dressed all in new clothes and had powdered her face. "Shut up!"

Lipa tried to stop but could not, and sobbed louder than ever.

"Do you hear?" shouted Aksinya, and she stamped her foot in violent anger. "Who is it I am speaking to? Go out of the yard and don't set foot here again, you convict's wife. Get away."

"There, there, there," the old man put in fussily. "Aksinya, don't make such an outcry, my girl. . . . She is crying, it is only natural . . . her child is dead. . . ."

"'It's only natural,'" Aksinya mimicked him. "Let her stay the night here, and don't let me see a trace of her here to-morrow! 'It's only natural!' . . ." she mimicked him again, and, laughing, she went into the shop.

Early the next morning Lipa went off to her mother at Torguevo.

Tsyoukin's house
most forgotten.

Grigory Petrovi
as he was in old d
passed into Aksiny
nothing can be d
brickyard is workin
for the railway th
four roubles a thou
cart the bricks to t
the trucks and earn
work.

Aksinya has gone
min Juniors, and the
Juniors and Co. T
the station, and nc
played not at the fa
head of the post o
too, is engaged in sc
tionmaster, too. H
the deaf man Stepan

in the morning to her brickyard, handsome and happy, with the naïve smile on her face, and afterwards when she is giving orders there, one is aware of great power in her. Everyone is afraid of her in the house and in the village and in the brickyard. When she goes to the post the head of the postal department jumps up and says to her:

"I humbly beg you to be seated, Aksinya Abramovna!"

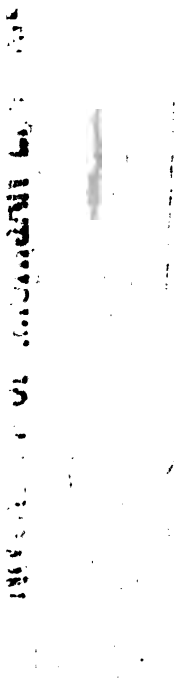
A certain landowner, middle-aged but foppish, in a tunic of fine cloth and patent leather high boots, sold her a horse, and was so carried away by talking to her that he knocked down the price to meet her wishes. He held her hand a long time and, looking into her merry, sly, naïve eyes, said:

"For a woman like you, Aksinya Abramovna, I should be ready to do anything you please. Only say when we can meet where no one will interfere with us?"

"Why, when you please."

And since then the elderly fop drives up to the shop almost every day to drink beer. And the beer is horrid, bitter as wormwood. The landowner shakes his head, but he drinks it.

Old Tsybukin does not have anything to do with the business now at all. He does not keep any money because he cannot distinguish between the good and the false, but he is silent, he says nothing of this weakness. He has become forgetful, and if they don't give him food he does not ask for it. They have grown used to having dinner without him, and Varvara often says:



turning up his c
along the road to
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sits there without
but he does not r
the peasants. If
quite rationally an

There is a rumo
his daughter-in-law
gives him nothing
charity; some are g

Varvara has gro
as before she is act
does not interfere w

There is so muc
time to eat it befo
goes sugary, and V
knowing what to do

They have begun
letter has come fro
big sheet of paper

the time; I am wretched, for Christ's sake help me!"

Towards evening — it was a fine autumn day — old Tsybukin was sitting near the church gates, with the collar of his fur coat turned up and nothing of him could be seen but his nose and the peak of his cap. At the other end of the long seat was sitting Elizarov the contractor, and beside him Yakov the school watchman, a toothless old man of seventy. Crutch and the watchman were talking.

"Children ought to give food and drink to the old. . . . Honour thy father and mother . . ." Yakov was saying with irritation, "while she, this daughter-in-law, has turned her father-in-law out of his own house; the old man has neither food nor drink, where is he to go? He has not had a morsel for these three days."

"Three days!" said Crutch, amazed.

"Here he sits and does not say a word. He has grown feeble. And why be silent? He ought to prosecute her, they wouldn't flatter her in the police court."

"Wouldn't flatter whom?" asked Crutch, not hearing.

"What?"

"The woman's all right, she does her best. In their line of business they can't get on without that . . . without sin, I mean. . . ."

"From his own house," Yakov went on with irritation. "Save up and buy your own house, then turn people out of it! She is a nice one, to be sure! A pla-ague!"

Buy a house, M
itch!' She was
'Buy yourself a
you may not ha
nothing but ginge
"Her husband
on, not hearing (
a goose. He ca
goose on the hea
does not understa
Crutch got up t
also got up, and bc
talking. When th
bukin got up, too,
uncertainly as thou
The village was
evening and the su
of the road which
slope. Old wome
woods and children
baskets of mushroc

them all was Lipa singing in a high voice, with her eyes turned upwards to the sky, breaking into trills as though triumphant and ecstatic that at last the day was over and she could rest. In the crowd was her mother Praskovya, who was walking with a bundle in her arms and breathless as usual.

"Good-evening, Makaritch!" cried Lipa, seeing Crutch. "Good-evening, darling!"

"Good-evening, Lipinka," cried Crutch delighted. "Dear girls and women, love the rich carpenter! Ho-ho! My little children, my little children. (Crutch gave a gulp.) My dear little axes!"

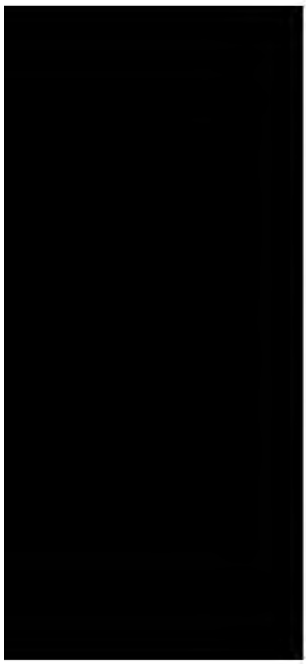
Crutch and Yakov went on further and could still be heard talking. Then after them the crowd was met by old Tsybukin and there was a sudden hush. Lipa and Praskovya had dropped a little behind, and when the old man was on a level with them Lipa bowed down low and said:

"Good-evening, Grigory Petrovitch."

Her mother, too, bowed down. The old man stopped and, saying nothing, looked at the two in silence; his lips were quivering and his eyes full of tears. Lipa took out of her mother's bundle a piece of savoury turnover and gave it him. He took it and began eating.

The sun had by now set: its glow died away on the road above. It grew dark and cool. Lipa and Praskovya walked on and for some time they kept crossing themselves.

THE HUNTSMAN



THE HUNTSMAN

A SULTRY, stifling midday. Not a cloudlet in the sky. . . . The sun-baked grass had a disconsolate, hopeless look: even if there were rain it could never be green again. . . . The forest stood silent, motionless, as though it were looking at something with its tree-tops or expecting something.

At the edge of the clearing a tall, narrow-shouldered man of forty in a red shirt, in patched trousers that had been a gentleman's, and in high boots, was slouching along with a lazy, shambling step. He was sauntering along the road. On the right was the green of the clearing, on the left a golden sea of ripe rye stretched to the very horizon. He was red and perspiring, a white cap with a straight jockey peak, evidently a gift from some open-handed young gentleman, perched jauntily on his handsome flaxen head. Across his shoulder hung a game-bag with a blackcock lying in it. The man held a double-barrelled gun cocked in his hand, and screwed up his eyes in the direction of his lean old dog who was running on ahead sniffing the bushes. There was stillness all round, not a sound . . . everything living was hiding away from the heat.

"Yegor Vlassitch!" the huntsman suddenly heard a soft voice.

He started and, looking round, scowled. Beside

as though she had sprung out of the earth,
a pale-faced woman of thirty with a sickle in
hand. She was trying to look into his face,
was smiling diffidently.

Oh, it is you, Pelagea!" said the huntsman,
ing and deliberately uncocking the gun.
m! . . . How have you come here?"

The women from our village are working here,
have come with them. . . . As a labourer,
r Vlassitch."

Oh . . ." growled Yegor Vlassitch, and slowly
ed on.

lagea followed him. They walked in silence
wenty paces.

have not seen you for a long time, Yegor
itch . . ." said Pelagea looking tenderly at

girl and looked up at Yegor's face. Her face was simply radiant with happiness.

"Sit down? If you like . . ." said Yegor in a tone of indifference, and he chose a spot between two fir-trees. "Why are you standing? You sit down too."

Pelagea sat a little way off in the sun and, ashamed of her joy, put her hand over her smiling mouth. Two minutes passed in silence.

"You might come for once," said Pelagea.

"What for?" sighed Yegor, taking off his cap and wiping his red forehead with his hand. "There is no object in my coming. To go for an hour or two is only waste of time, it's simply upsetting you, and to live continually in the village my soul could not endure. . . . You know yourself I am a pampered man. . . . I want a bed to sleep in, good tea to drink, and refined conversation. . . . I want all the niceties, while you live in poverty and dirt in the village. . . . I couldn't stand it for a day. Suppose there were an edict that I must live with you, I should either set fire to the hut or lay hands on myself. From a boy I've had this love for ease; there is no help for it."

"Where are you living now?"

"With the gentleman here, Dmitry Ivanitch, as a huntsman. I furnish his table with game, but he keeps me . . . more for his pleasure than anything."

"That's not proper work you're doing, Yegor Vlassitch. . . . For other people it's a pastime, but with you it's like a trade . . . like real work."

You don't understand, you silly," said Yegor,
g gloomily at the sky. "You have never un-
ood, and as long as you live you will never
rstand what sort of man I am. . . . You think
e as a foolish man, gone to the bad, but to any-
who understands I am the best shot there is in
whole district. The gentry feel that, and they
even printed things about me in a magazine.
e isn't a man to be compared with me as a
sman. . . . And it is not because I am pam-
l and proud that I look down upon your village
. From my childhood, you know, I have never
ny calling apart from guns and dogs. If they
away my gun, I used to go out with the fishing-
, if they took the hook I caught things with my
s. And I went in for horse-dealing too, I used

. . . there has never once been love between us! . . . I . . . I am not crying."

"Love . . ." muttered Yegor, scratching his hand. "There can't be any love. It's only in name we are husband and wife; we aren't really. In your eyes I am a wild man, and in mine you are a simple peasant woman with no understanding. Are we well matched? I am a free, pampered, profligate man, while you are a working woman, going in bark shoes and never straightening your back. The way I think of myself is that I am the foremost man in every kind of sport, and you look at me with pity. . . . Is that being well matched?"

"But we are married, you know, Yegor Vlassitch," sobbed Pelagea.

"Not married of our free will. . . . Have you forgotten? You have to thank Count Sergey Pavlovitch and yourself. Out of envy, because I shot better than he did, the Count kept giving me wine for a whole month, and when a man's drunk you could make him change his religion, let alone getting married. To pay me out he married me to you when I was drunk. . . . A huntsman to a herd-girl! You saw I was drunk, why did you marry me? You were not a serf, you know; you could have resisted. Of course it was a bit of luck for a herd-girl to marry a huntsman, but you ought to have thought about it. Well, now be miserable, cry. It's a joke for the Count, but a crying matter for you. . . . Beat yourself against the wall."

A silence followed. Three wild ducks flew over the clearing. Yegor followed them with his eyes

till, transformed into three scarcely visible dots, they sank down far beyond the forest.

"How do you live?" he asked, moving his eyes from the ducks to Pelagea.

"Now I am going out to work, and in the winter I take a child from the Foundling Hospital and bring it up on the bottle. They give me a rouble and a half a month."

"Oh. . . ."

Again a silence. From the strip that had been reaped floated a soft song which broke off at the very beginning. It was too hot to sing.

"They say you have put up a new hut for Akulina," said Pelagea.

Yegor did not speak.

"So she is dear to you. . . ."

"It's your luck, it's fate!" said the huntsman, stretching. "You must put up with it, poor thing. But good-bye, I've been chattering long enough. . . . I must be at Boltovo by the evening."

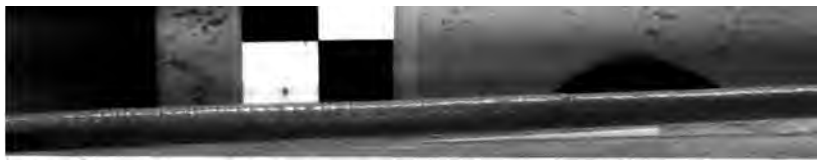
Yegor rose, stretched himself, and slung his gun over his shoulder; Pelagea got up.

"And when are you coming to the village?" she asked softly.

"I have no reason to, I shall never come sober, and you have little to gain from me drunk; I am spiteful when I am drunk. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Yegor Vlassitch."

Yegor put his cap on the back of his head and, clicking to his dog, went on his way. Pelagea stood still looking after him. . . . She saw his moving shoulder-blades, his jaunty cap, his lazy, careless



step, and her eyes were full of sadness and tender affection. . . . Her gaze flitted over her husband's tall, lean figure and caressed and fondled it. . . . He, as though he felt that gaze, stopped and looked round. . . . He did not speak, but from his face, from his shrugged shoulders, Pelagea could see that he wanted to say something to her. She went up to him timidly and looked at him with imploring eyes.

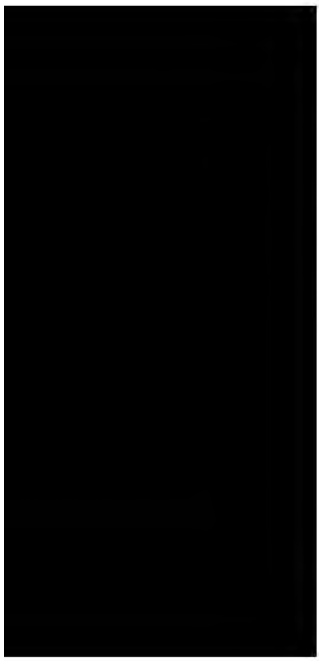
"Take it," he said, turning round.

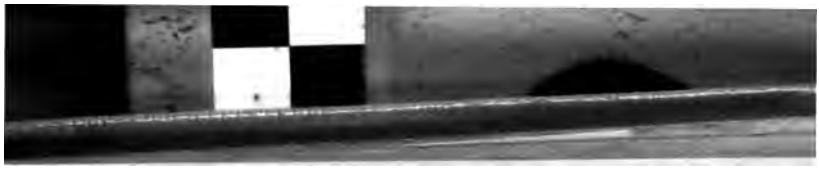
He gave her a crumpled rouble note and walked quickly away.

"Good-bye, Yegor Vlassitch," she said, mechanically taking the rouble.

He walked by a long road, straight as a taut strap. She, pale and motionless as a statue, stood, her eyes seizing every step he took. But the red of his shirt melted into the dark colour of his trousers, his step could not be seen, and the dog could not be distinguished from the boots. Nothing could be seen but the cap, and . . . suddenly Yegor turned off sharply into the clearing and the cap vanished in the greenness.

"Good-bye, Yegor Vlassitch," whispered Pelagea, and she stood on tiptoe to see the white cap once more.





HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS

A FLOCK of sheep was spending the night on the broad steppe road that is called the great highway. Two shepherds were guarding it. One, a toothless old man of eighty, with a tremulous face, was lying on his stomach at the very edge of the road, leaning his elbows on the dusty leaves of a plantain; the other, a young fellow with thick black eyebrows and no moustache, dressed in the coarse canvas of which cheap sacks are made, was lying on his back, with his arms under his head, looking upwards at the sky, where the stars were slumbering and the Milky Way lay stretched exactly above his face.

The shepherds were not alone. A couple of yards from them in the dusk that shrouded the road a horse made a patch of darkness, and, beside it, leaning against the saddle, stood a man in high boots and a short full-skirted jacket who looked like an overseer on some big estate. Judging from his upright and motionless figure, from his manners, and his behaviour to the shepherds and to his horse, he was a serious, reasonable man who knew his own value; even in the darkness signs could be detected in him of military carriage and of the majestically condescending expression gained by frequent intercourse with the gentry and their stewards.

themselves, crush
ing there as thou
neither the presen
of the dogs.

The drowsy, st
onous noise insepa
steppes; the grass
quails called, and
guidly half a mile
flowed and willow

The overseer h
for a light for hi
and smoked the w
tering a word, sto
plunged in thought
notice of him, he
the old man slowly
and then asked:

"Why, aren't y
tate?"

"That's myself,'

"From the Kovylyevsky fields."

"That's a good way. Are you letting the land on the part-crop system?"

"Part of it. Some like that, and some we are letting on lease, and some for raising melons and cucumbers. I have just come from the mill."

A big shaggy old sheep-dog of a dirty white colour with woolly tufts about its nose and eyes walked three times quietly round the horse, trying to seem unconcerned in the presence of strangers, then all at once dashed suddenly from behind at the overseer with an angry aged growl; the other dogs could not refrain from leaping up too.

"Lie down, you damned brute," cried the old man, raising himself on his elbow; "blast you, you devil's creature."

When the dogs were quiet again, the old man resumed his former attitude and said quietly:

"It was at Kovyli on Ascension Day that Yefim Zhmenya died. Don't speak of it in the dark, it is a sin to mention such people. He was a wicked old man. I dare say you have heard."

"No, I haven't."

"Yefim Zhmenya, the uncle of Styopka, the blacksmith. The whole district round knew him. Aye, he was a cursed old man, he was! I knew him for sixty years, ever since Tsar Alexander who beat the French was brought from Taganrog to Moscow. We went together to meet the dead Tsar, and in those days the great highway did not run to Bahmut, but from Esaulovka to Gorodishtche, and where Kovyli is now, there were bustards' nests — there

seemed to be sulk
a hen. To go to
in the street with
would rather sit
women. When h
look after the bee
folks would come
and his melons we
a pike, when folks
aloud, ' Ho-ho-ho-h

" It does happer

The young shep
ing his black eyeb
man.

" Did you hear

" Hear them I
sighed the old mar
no great wonder
whistling in a stor
Day of Freedom
days and three nigh

quickly on to his knees and, shrinking as though from the cold, nervously thrusting his hands into his sleeves, he muttered in a rapid womanish gabble:

"Lord save us and have mercy upon us! I was walking along the river bank one day to Novopavlovka. A storm was gathering, such a tempest it was, preserve us Holy Mother, Queen of Heaven. . . . I was hurrying on as best I could, I looked, and beside the path between the thorn bushes — the thorn was in flower at the time — there was a white bullock coming along. I wondered whose bullock it was, and what the devil had sent it there for. It was coming along and swinging its tail and moo-oo-oo! but would you believe it, friends, I overtake it, I come up close — and it's not a bullock, but Yefim — holy, holy, holy! I make the sign of the cross while he stares at me and mutters, showing the whites of his eyes; wasn't I frightened! We came alongside, I was afraid to say a word to him — the thunder was crashing, the sky was streaked with lightning, the willows were bent right down to the water — all at once, my friends, God strike me dead that I die impenitent, a hare ran across the path . . . it ran and stopped, and said like a man: 'Good-evening, peasants.' Lie down, you brute!" the old man cried to the shaggy dog, who was moving round the horse again. "Plague take you!"

"It does happen," said the overseer, still leaning on the saddle and not stirring; he said this in the hollow, toneless voice in which men speak when they are plunged in thought.

It does happen," he repeated, in a tone of pro-
ity and conviction.

Ugh, he was a nasty old fellow," the old shep-
went on with somewhat less fervour. "Five
s after the Freedom he was flogged by the
nune at the office, so to show his spite he took
sent the throat illness upon all Kovyli. Folks
out of number, lots and lots of them, just as in
ra. . . ."

How did he send the illness?" asked the young
herd after a brief silence.

We all know how, there is no great cleverness
ed where there is a will to it. Yefim murdered
le with viper's fat. That is such a poison that
will die from the mere smell of it, let alone
at."

The overseer lit a pipe, and for an instant lighted up his big moustaches and his sharp, stern-looking, and dignified nose. Little circles of light danced from his hands to his cap, raced over the saddle along the horse's back, and vanished in its mane near its ears.

"There are lots of hidden treasures in these parts," he said.

And slowly stretching, he looked round him, resting his eyes on the whitening east and added:

"There must be treasures."

"To be sure," sighed the old man, "one can see from every sign there are treasures, only there is no one to dig them, brother. No one knows the real places; besides, nowadays, you must remember, all the treasures are under a charm. To find them and see them you must have a talisman, and without a talisman you can do nothing, lad. Yefim had talismans, but there was no getting anything out of him, the bald devil. He kept them, so that no one could get them."

The young shepherd crept two paces nearer to the old man and, propping his head on his fists, fastened his fixed stare upon him. A childish expression of terror and curiosity gleamed in his dark eyes, and seemed in the twilight to stretch and flatten out the large features of his coarse young face. He was listening intently.

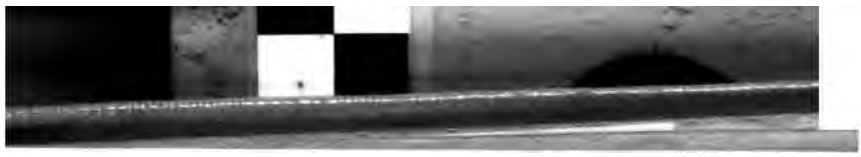
"It is even written in the Scriptures that there are lots of treasures hidden here," the old man went on; "it is so for sure . . . and no mistake about it. An old soldier of Novopavlovka was

n at Ivanovka a writing, and in this writing it
printed about the place of the treasure and even
many pounds of gold was in it and the sort
ssel it was in; they would have found the treas-
long ago by that writing, only the treasure is
r a spell, you can't get at it."

Why can't you get at it, grandfather?" asked
oung man.

suppose there is some reason, the soldier didn't
It is under a spell . . . you need a talisman."

he old man spoke with warmth, as though he
pouring out his soul before the overseer. He
d through his nose and, being unaccustomed to
much and rapidly, stuttered; and, conscious of
efects, he tried to adorn his speech with gesticu-
ns of the hands and head and thin shoulders,



written in the law that if any peasant finds the treasure he is to take it to the authorities! I dare say, wait till you get it! There is a brew but not for you!"

The old man laughed contemptuously and sat down on the ground. The overseer listened with attention and agreed, but from his silence and the expression of his figure it was evident that what the old man told him was not new to him, that he had thought it all over long ago, and knew much more than was known to the old shepherd.

"In my day, I must own, I did seek for fortune a dozen times," said the old man, scratching himself nervously. "I looked in the right places, but I must have come on treasures under a charm. My father looked for it, too, and my brother, too — but not a thing did they find, so they died without luck. A monk revealed to my brother Ilya — the Kingdom of Heaven be his — that in one place in the fortress of Taganrog there was a treasure under three stones, and that that treasure was under a charm, and in those days — it was, I remember, in the year '38 — an Armenian used to live at Matvyeev Barrow who sold talismans. Ilya bought a talisman, took two other fellows with him, and went to Taganrog. Only when he got to the place in the fortress, brother, there was a soldier with a gun, standing at the very spot. . . ."

A sound suddenly broke on the still air, and floated in all directions over the steppe. Something in the distance gave a menacing bang, crashed against stone, and raced over the steppe, uttering,

h! tah! tah! tah!" When the sound had died
the old man looked inquiringly at Panteley,
stood motionless and unconcerned.
It's a bucket broken away at the pits," said
oung shepherd after a moment's thought.
was by now getting light. The Milky Way
turned pale and gradually melted like snow,
g its outlines; the sky was becoming dull and
so that you could not make out whether it
clear or covered thickly with clouds, and only
the bright leaden streak in the east and from
stars that lingered here and there could one
vhat was coming.
he first noiseless breeze of morning, cautiously
ng the spurges and the brown stalks of last
s grass, fluttered along the road.

Stroking his long moustaches covered with dew, he seated himself heavily on the horse and screwed up his eyes, looking into the distance, as though he had forgotten something or left something unsaid. In the bluish distance where the furthest visible hillock melted into the mist nothing was stirring; the ancient barrows, once watch-mounds and tombs, which rose here and there above the horizon and the boundless steppe had a sullen and death-like look; there was a feeling of endless time and utter indifference to man in their immobility and silence; another thousand years would pass, myriads of men would die, while they would still stand as they had stood, with no regret for the dead nor interest in the living, and no soul would ever know why they stood there, and what secret of the steppes was hidden under them.

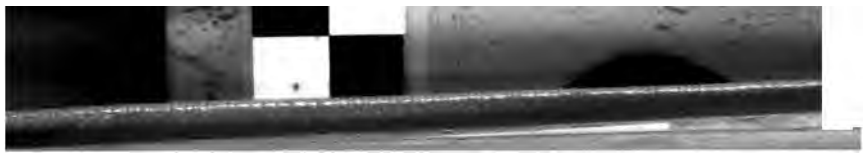
The rooks awakening, flew one after another in silence over the earth. No meaning was to be seen in the languid flight of those long-lived birds, nor in the morning which is repeated punctually every twenty-four hours, nor in the boundless expanse of the steppe.

The overseer smiled and said:

"What space, Lord have mercy upon us! You would have a hunt to find treasure in it! Here," he went on, dropping his voice and making a serious face, "here there are two treasures buried for a certainty. The gentry don't know of them, but the old peasants, particularly the soldiers, know all about them. Here, somewhere on that ridge [the overseer pointed with his whip] robbers one time attacked

avan of gold; the gold was being taken from sburg to the Emperor Peter who was building t at the time at Voronezh. The robbers killed nen with the caravan and buried the gold, but ot find it again afterwards. Another treasure uried by our Cossacks of the Don. In the year ey carried off lots of plunder of all sorts from rench, goods and gold and silver. When they going homewards they heard on the way that overnment wanted to take away all the gold silver from them. Rather than give up their ler like that to the government for nothing, the fellows took and buried it, so that their chil- anyway, might get it; but where they buried one knows."

have heard of those treasures," the old man ered grimly



The sheep, waking up — there were about three thousand of them — began without zest to while away the time, nipping at the low, half-trampled grass. The sun had not yet risen, but by now all the barrows could be seen and, like a cloud in the distance, Saur's Grave with its peaked top. If one clambered up on that tomb one could see the plain from it, level and boundless as the sky, one could see villages, manor-houses, the settlements of the Germans and of the Molokani, and a long-sighted Kalmuck could even see the town and the railway-station. Only from there could one see that there was something else in the world besides the silent steppe and the ancient barrows, that there was another life that had nothing to do with buried treasure and the thoughts of sheep.

The old man felt beside him for his crook — a long stick with a hook at the upper end — and got up. He was silent and thoughtful. The young shepherd's face had not lost the look of childish terror and curiosity. He was still under the influence of what he had heard in the night, and impatiently awaiting fresh stories.

"Grandfather," he asked, getting up and taking his crook, "what did your brother Ilya do with the soldier?"

The old man did not hear the question. He looked absent-mindedly at the young man, and answered, mumbling with his lips:

"I keep thinking, Sanka, about that writing that was shown to that soldier at Ivanovka. I didn't tell Panteley — God be with him — but you know

at writing the place was marked out so that a woman could find it. Do you know where ? At Bogata Bylotchka at the spot, you know, e the ravine parts like a goose's foot into three ravines; it is the middle one."

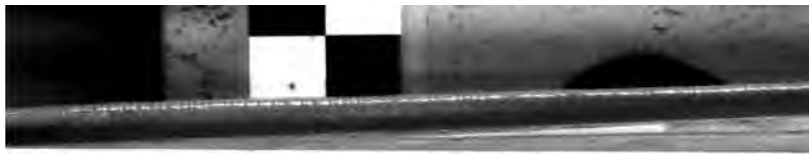
Well, will you dig?"

I will try my luck . . ."

And, grandfather, what will you do with the ure when you find it?"

Do with it?" laughed the old man. "H'm! If only I could find it then. . . . I would show all. . . . H'm! . . . I should know what to . . ."

nd the old man could not answer what he would ith the treasure if he found it. That question presented itself to him that morning probably



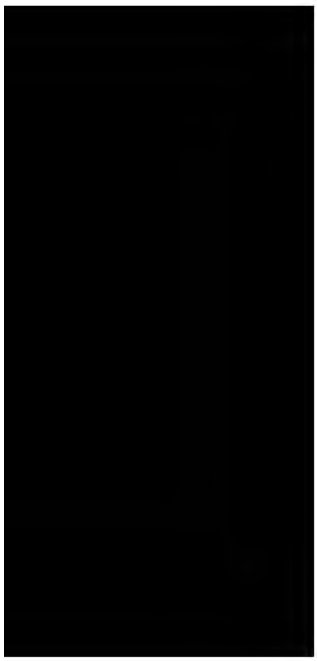
onion, the yellow mustard, the corn-flowers — all burst into gay colours, taking the sunlight for their own smile.

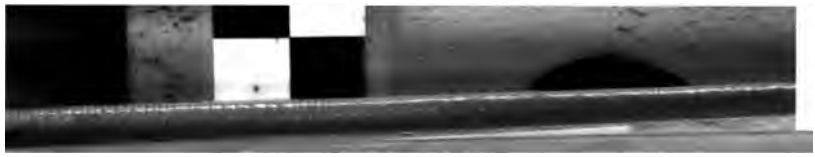
The old shepherd and Sanka parted and stood at the further sides of the flock. Both stood like posts, without moving, staring at the ground and thinking. The former was haunted by thoughts of fortune, the latter was pondering on what had been said in the night; what interested him was not the fortune itself, which he did not want and could not imagine, but the fantastic, fairy-tale character of human happiness.

A hundred sheep started and, in some inexplicable panic as at a signal, dashed away from the flock; and as though the thoughts of the sheep — tedious and oppressive — had for a moment infected Sanka also, he, too, dashed aside in the same inexplicable animal panic, but at once he recovered himself and shouted:

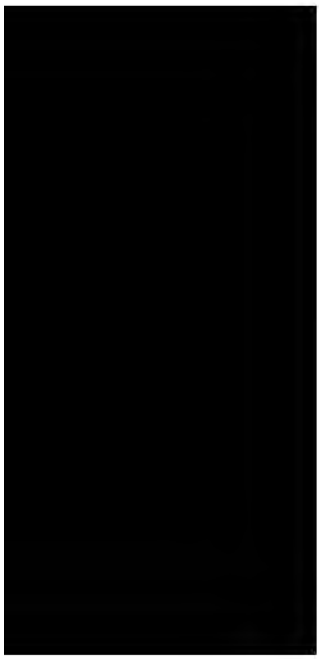
"You crazy creatures! You've gone mad, plague take you!"

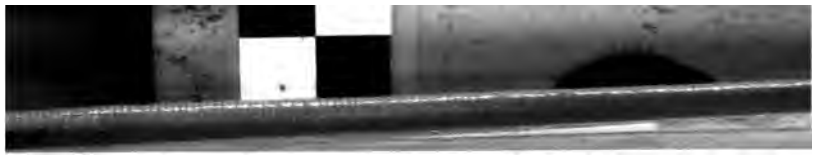
When the sun, promising long hours of overwhelming heat, began to bake the earth, all living things that in the night had moved and uttered sounds were sunk in drowsiness. The old shepherd and Sanka stood with their crooks on opposite sides of the flock, stood without stirring, like fakirs at their prayers, absorbed in thought. They did not heed each other; each of them was living in his own life. The sheep were pondering, too.





A MALEFACTOR





A MALEFACTOR

AN exceedingly lean little peasant, in a striped hempen shirt and patched drawers, stands facing the investigating magistrate. His face overgrown with hair and pitted with smallpox, and his eyes scarcely visible under thick, overhanging eyebrows have an expression of sullen moroseness. On his head there is a perfect mop of tangled, unkempt hair, which gives him an even more spider-like air of moroseness. He is barefooted.

"Denis Grigoryev!" the magistrate begins. "Come nearer, and answer my questions. On the seventh of this July the railway watchman, Ivan Semyonovitch Akinfov, going along the line in the morning, found you at the hundred-and-forty-first mile engaged in unscrewing a nut by which the rails are made fast to the sleepers. Here it is, the nut! . . . With the aforesaid nut he detained you. Was that so?"

"Wha-at?"

"Was this all as Akinfov states?"

"To be sure, it was."

"Very good; well, what were you unscrewing the nut for?"

"Wha-at?"

"Drop that 'wha-at' and answer the question; what were you unscrewing the nut for?"

If I hadn't wanted it I shouldn't have un-
ved it," croaks Denis, looking at the ceiling.
What did you want that nut for?"
The nut? We make weights out of those nuts
our lines."
Who is 'we'?"
We, people. . . . The Klimovo peasants, that

Listen, my man; don't play the idiot to me, but
k sensibly. It's no use telling lies here about
hts!"
I've never been a liar from a child, and now
telling lies . . ." mutters Denis, blinking.
t can you do without a weight, your honour?
ou put live bait or maggots on a hook, would
to the bottom without a weight? . . . I am
g lies," grins Denis. "What the devil is

"What else for? It wasn't to play knuckle-bones with!"

"But you might have taken lead, a bullet . . . a nail of some sort. . . ."

"You don't pick up lead in the road, you have to buy it, and a nail's no good. You can't find anything better than a nut. . . . It's heavy, and there's a hole in it."

"He keeps pretending to be a fool! as though he'd been born yesterday or dropped from heaven! Don't you understand, you blockhead, what unscrewing these nuts leads to? If the watchman had not noticed it the train might have run off the rails, people would have been killed — you would have killed people."

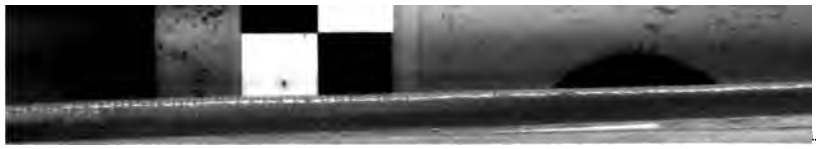
"God forbid, your honour! What should I kill them for? Are we heathens or wicked people? Thank God, good gentlemen, we have lived all our lives without ever dreaming of such a thing. . . . Save, and have mercy on us, Queen of Heaven! . . . What are you saying?"

"And what do you suppose railway accidents do come from? Unscrew two or three nuts and you have an accident."

Denis grins, and screws up his eye at the magistrate incredulously.

"Why! how many years have we all in the village been unscrewing nuts, and the Lord has been merciful; and you talk of accidents, killing people. If I had carried away a rail or put a log across the line, say, then maybe it might have upset the train, but . . . pouf! a nut!"

But you must understand that the nut holds the
ast to the sleepers!"
We understand that. . . . We don't unscrew
all . . . we leave some. . . . We don't do
oughtlessly . . . we understand. . . ."
enis yawns and makes the sign of the cross over
nouth.
Last year the train went off the rails here," says
nagistrate. "Now I see why!"
What do you say, your honour?"
I am telling you that now I see why the train
off the rails last year. . . . I understand!"
That's what you are educated people for, to
rstand, you kind gentlemen. The Lord knows
hom to give understanding. . . . Here you
reasoned how and what, but the watchman, a
ant like ourselves, with no understanding at all,



sledge in the yard Mitrofan and I unscrewed together."

"What Mitrofan?"

"Mitrofan Petrov. . . . Haven't you heard of him? He makes nets in our village and sells them to the gentry. He needs a lot of those nuts. Reckon a matter of ten for each net."

"Listen. Article 1081 of the Penal Code lays down that every wilful damage of the railway line committed when it can expose the traffic on that line to danger, and the guilty party knows that an accident must be caused by it . . . (Do you understand? Knows! And you could not help knowing what this unscrewing would lead to . . .) is liable to penal servitude."

"Of course, you know best. . . . We are ignorant people. . . . What do we understand?"

"You understand all about it! You are lying, shamming!"

"What should I lie for? Ask in the village if you don't believe me. Only a bleak is caught without a weight, and there is no fish worse than a gudgeon, yet even that won't bite without a weight."

"You'd better tell me about the shillisper next," said the magistrate, smiling.

"There are no shillispers in our parts. . . . We cast our line without a weight on the top of the water with a butterfly; a mullet may be caught that way, though that is not often."

"Come, hold your tongue."

A silence follows. Denis shifts from one foot to the other, looks at the table with the green cloth on

nd blinks his eyes violently as though what was re him was not the cloth but the sun. The strate writes rapidly.

Can I go?" asks Denis after a long silence.

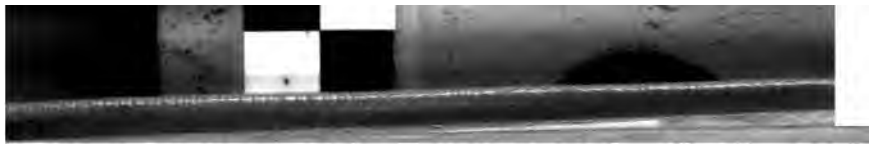
No. I must take you under guard and send to prison."

enis leaves off blinking and, raising his thick rows, looks inquiringly at the magistrate.

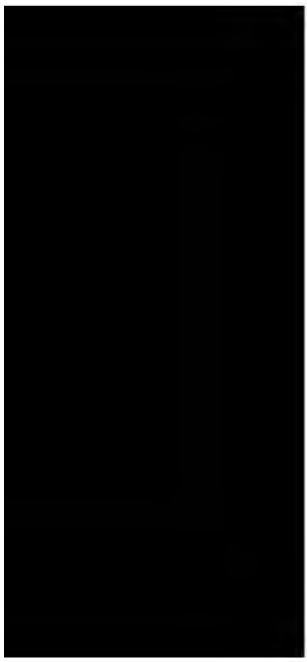
How do you mean, to prison? Your honour! ve no time to spare, I must go to the fair; I get three roubles from Yegor for some tal- . . ."

Hold your tongue; don't interrupt."

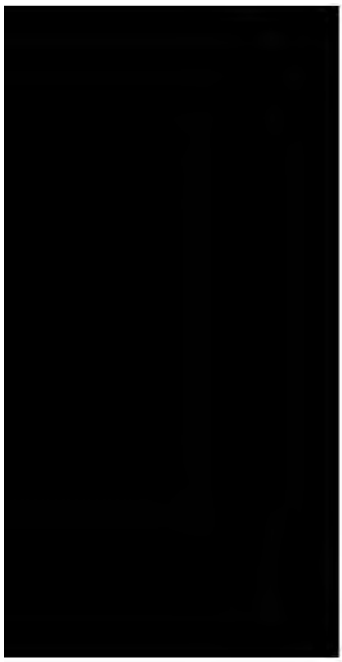
To prison. . . . If there was something to go I'd go; but just to go for nothing! What for? ven't stolen anything, I believe, and I've not fighting. If you are in doubt about the



answer for it. . . . Judges indeed! Our master the general is dead — the Kingdom of Heaven be his — or he would have shown you judges. . . . You ought to judge sensibly, not at random. . . . Flog if you like, but flog someone who deserves it, flog with conscience."



PEASANTS



PEASANTS

I

NIKOLAY TCHIKILDYEEV, a waiter in the Moscow hotel, Slavyansky Bazaar, was taken ill. His legs went numb and his gait was affected, so that on one occasion, as he was going along the corridor, he tumbled and fell down with a tray full of ham and peas. He had to leave his job. All his own savings and his wife's were spent on doctors and medicines; they had nothing left to live upon. He felt dull with no work to do, and he made up his mind he must go home to the village. It is better to be ill at home, and living there is cheaper; and it is a true saying that the walls of home are a help.

He reached Zhukovo towards evening. In his memories of childhood he had pictured his home as bright, snug, comfortable. Now, going into the hut, he was positively frightened; it was so dark, so crowded, so unclean. His wife Olga and his daughter Sasha, who had come with him, kept looking in bewilderment at the big untidy stove, which filled up almost half the hut and was black with soot and flies. What lots of flies! The stove was on one side, the beams lay slanting on the walls, and it looked as though the hut were just going to fall to pieces. In the corner, facing the door, under the

images, bottle labels and newspaper cuttings stuck on the walls instead of pictures. The rty, the poverty! Of the grown-up people there none at home; all were at work at the harvest. he stove was sitting a white-headed girl of , unwashed and apathetic; she did not even e at them as they came in. On the floor a cat was rubbing itself against the oven fork.

Puss, puss!" Sasha called to her. "Puss!"

She can't hear," said the little girl; "she has deaf."

How is that?"

Oh, she was beaten."

kolay and Olga realized from the first glance life was like here, but said nothing to one ner; in silence they put down their bundles, went out into the village street. Their hut the third from the end, and seemed the very

red, lay piled up in heaps, and below there stretched a broad, level, bright green meadow, from which the hay had been already carried, and in which the peasants' cattle were wandering. The river, three-quarters of a mile from the village, ran twisting and turning, with beautiful leafy banks; beyond it was again a broad meadow, a herd of cattle, long strings of white geese; then, just as on the near side, a steep ascent uphill, and on the top of the hill a hamlet, and a church with five domes, and at a little distance the manor-house.

"It's lovely here in your parts!" said Olga, crossing herself at the sight of the church. "What space, oh Lord!"

Just at that moment the bell began ringing for service (it was Saturday evening). Two little girls, down below, who were dragging up a pail of water, looked round at the church to listen to the bell.

"At this time they are serving the dinners at the Slavyansky Bazaar," said Nikolay dreamily.

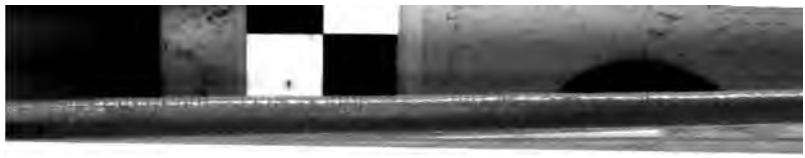
Sitting on the edge of the slope, Nikolay and Olga watched the sun setting, watched the gold and crimson sky reflected in the river, in the church windows, and in the whole air — which was soft and still and unutterably pure as it never was in Moscow. And when the sun had set the flocks and herds passed, bleating and lowing; geese flew across from the further side of the river, and all sank into silence; the soft light died away in the air, and the dusk of evening began quickly moving down upon them.

Meanwhile Nikolay's father and mother, two gaunt, bent, toothless old people, just of the same

t, came back. The women — the sisters-in-
Marya and Fyokla — who had been working on
andowner's estate beyond the river, arrived
, too. Marya, the wife of Nikolay's brother
k, had six children, and Fyokla, the wife of
lay's brother Denis — who had gone for a sol-
— had two; and when Nikolay, going into the
saw all the family, all those bodies big and little
ng about on the lockers, in the hanging cradles
n all the corners, and when he saw the greed
which the old father and the women ate the
bread, dipping it in water, he realized he had
a mistake in coming here, sick, penniless, and
a family, too — a great mistake!

And where is Kiryak?" he asked after they had
nged greetings.

He is in service at the merchant's," answered



to empty their first cups there came a loud, prolonged, drunken shout from the yard:

"Ma-arya!"

"It looks as though Kiryak were coming," said the old man. "Speak of the devil."

All were hushed. And again, soon afterwards, the same shout, coarse and drawn-out as though it came out of the earth:

"Ma-arya!"

Marya, the elder sister-in-law, turned pale and huddled against the stove, and it was strange to see the look of terror on the face of the strong, broad-shouldered, ugly woman. Her daughter, the child who had been sitting on the stove and looked so apathetic, suddenly broke into loud weeping.

"What are you howling for, you plague?" Fyokla, a handsome woman, also strong and broad-shouldered, shouted to her. "He won't kill you, no fear!"

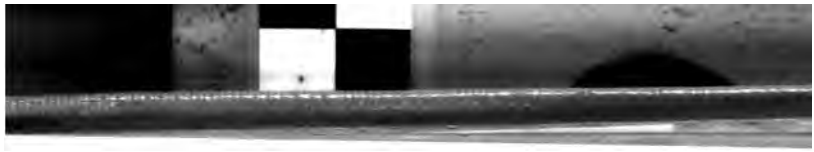
From his old father Nikolay learned that Marya was afraid to live in the forest with Kiryak, and that when he was drunk he always came for her, made a row, and beat her mercilessly.

"Ma-arya!" the shout sounded close to the door.

"Protect me, for Christ's sake, good people!" faltered Marya, breathing as though she had been plunged into very cold water. "Protect me, kind people. . . ."

All the children in the hut began crying, and looking at them, Sasha, too, began to cry. They heard a drunken cough, and a tall, black-bearded peasant wearing a winter cap came into the hut,

was the more terrible because his face could
be seen in the dim light of the little lamp. It
Kiryak. Going up to his wife, he swung his
and punched her in the face with his fist.
ned by the blow, she did not utter a sound,
at down, and her nose instantly began bleeding.
What a disgrace! What a disgrace!" mut-
l the old man, clambering up on to the stove.
fore visitors, too! It's a sin!"
he old mother sat silent, bowed, lost in thought;
la rocked the cradle.
vidently conscious of inspiring fear, and pleased
oing so, Kiryak seized Marya by the arm,
ged her towards the door, and bellowed like
nimal in order to seem still more terrible; but
at moment he suddenly caught sight of the visi-
and stopped.



Sasha lay down on the floor, while Olga went with the other women into the barn.

"Aye, aye, dearie," she said, lying down on the hay beside Marya; "you won't mend your trouble with tears. Bear it in patience, that is all. It is written in the Scriptures: 'If anyone smite thee on the right cheek, offer him the left one also.' . . . Aye, aye, dearie."

Then in a low singsong murmur she told them about Moscow, about her own life, how she had been a servant in furnished lodgings.

"And in Moscow the houses are big, built of brick," she said; "and there are ever so many churches, forty times forty, dearie; and they are all gentry in the houses, so handsome and so proper!"

Marya told her that she had not only never been in Moscow, but had not even been in their own district town; she could not read or write, and knew no prayers, not even "Our Father." Both she and Fyokla, the other sister-in-law, who was sitting a little way off listening, were extremely ignorant and could understand nothing. They both disliked their husbands; Marya was afraid of Kiryak, and whenever he stayed with her she was shaking with fear, and always got a headache from the fumes of vodka and tobacco with which he reeked. And in answer to the question whether she did not miss her husband, Fyokla answered with vexation:

"Miss him!"

They talked a little and sank into silence.

It was cool, and a cock crowed at the top of his

near the barn, preventing them from sleeping. n the bluish morning light was already peeping ugh all the crevices, Fyokla got up stealthily went out, and then they heard the sound of her feet running off somewhere.

II

lga went to church, and took Marya with her. hey went down the path towards the meadow were in good spirits. Olga liked the wide , and Marya felt that in her sister-in-law she someone near and akin to her. The sun was g. Low down over the meadow floated a sy hawk. The river looked gloomy; there was ze hovering over it here and there, but on the her bank a streak of light already stretched

and words like "forasmuch as" and "verily" she pronounced with a sweet flutter at her heart. She believed in God, in the Holy Mother, in the Saints; she believed one must not offend anyone in the world — not simple folks, nor Germans, nor gypsies, nor Jews — and woe even to those who have no compassion on the beasts. She believed this was written in the Holy Scriptures; and so, when she pronounced phrases from Holy Writ, even though she did not understand them, her face grew softened, compassionate, and radiant.

"What part do you come from?" Marya asked her.

"I am from Vladimir. Only I was taken to Moscow long ago, when I was eight years old."

They reached the river. On the further side a woman was standing at the water's edge, undressing.

"It's our Fyokla," said Marya, recognizing her. "She has been over the river to the manor yard. To the stewards. She is a shameless hussy and foul-mouthed — fearfully!"

Fyokla, young and vigorous as a girl, with her black eyebrows and her loose hair, jumped off the bank and began splashing the water with her feet, and waves ran in all directions from her.

"Shameless — dreadfully!" repeated Marya.

The river was crossed by a rickety little bridge of logs, and exactly below it in the clear, limpid water was a shoal of broad-headed mullets. The dew was glistening on the green bushes that looked into the water. There was a feeling of warmth; it was com-

ng! What a lovely morning! And how
y life would have been in this world, in all like-
d, if it were not for poverty, horrible, hopeless
rty, from which one can find no refuge! One
only to look round at the village to remember
ly all that had happened the day before, and
llusion of happiness which seemed to surround
vanished instantly.

ney reached the church. Marya stood at the
nce, and did not dare to go farther. She did
lare to sit down either. Though they only be-
ringing for mass between eight and nine, she
ined standing the whole time.

hile the gospel was being read the crowd sud-
parted to make way for the family from the
house. Two young girls in white frocks and
-brimmed hats walked in; with them a chubby,

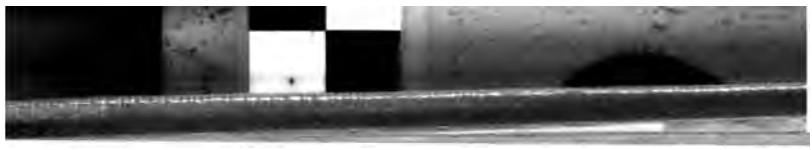
chevs and Matvyeitchevs and the Ilyitchovs came to inquire about their relations who were in service in Moscow. All the lads of Zhukovo who could read and write were packed off to Moscow and hired out as butlers or waiters (while from the village on the other side of the river the boys all became bakers), and that had been the custom from the days of serfdom long ago when a certain Luka Ivanitch, a peasant from Zhukovo, now a legendary figure, who had been a waiter in one of the Moscow clubs, would take none but his fellow-villagers into his service, and found jobs for them in taverns and restaurants; and from that time the village of Zhukovo was always called among the inhabitants of the surrounding districts Slaveytown. Nikolay had been taken to Moscow when he was eleven, and Ivan Makaritch, one of the Matvyeitchevs, at that time a head-waiter in the "Hermitage" garden, had put him into a situation. And now, addressing the Matvyeitchevs, Nikolay said emphatically:

"Ivan Makaritch was my benefactor, and I am bound to pray for him day and night, as it is owing to him I have become a good man."

"My good soul!" a tall old woman, the sister of Ivan Makaritch, said tearfully, "and not a word have we heard about him, poor dear."

"In the winter he was in service at Omon's, and this season there was a rumour he was somewhere out of town, in gardens. . . . He has aged! In old days he would bring home as much as ten roubles a day in the summer-time, but now things are very quiet everywhere. The old man frets."

he women looked at Nikolay's feet, shod in felt
s, and at his pale face, and said mournfully:
You are not one to get on, Nikolay Osipitch; you
ot one to get on! No, indeed!"
nd they all made much of Sasha. She was ten
s old, but she was little and very thin, and might
been taken for no more than seven. Among
ther little girls, with their sunburnt faces and
hly cropped hair, dressed in long faded smocks,
vith her white little face, with her big dark eyes,
a red ribbon in her hair, looked funny, as
gh she were some little wild creature that had
caught and brought into the hut.
She can read, too," Olga said in her praise,
ng tenderly at her daughter. "Read a little,
!" she said, taking the gospel from the corner.
u read, and the good Christian people will



and after her Ivan Makaritch's sister. The old father cleared his throat, and bustled about to find something to give his grand-daughter, but, finding nothing, gave it up with a wave of his hand. And when the reading was over the neighbours dispersed to their homes, feeling touched and very much pleased with Olga and Sasha.

As it was a holiday, the family spent the whole day at home. The old woman, whom her husband, her daughters-in-law, her grandchildren all alike called Granny, tried to do everything herself; she heated the stove and set the samovar with her own hands, even waited at the midday meal, and then complained that she was worn out with work. And all the time she was uneasy for fear someone should eat a piece too much, or that her husband and daughters-in-law would sit idle. At one time she would hear the tavern-keeper's geese going at the back of the huts to her kitchen-garden, and she would run out of the hut with a long stick and spend half an hour screaming shrilly by her cabbages, which were as gaunt and scraggy as herself; at another time she fancied that a crow had designs on her chickens, and she rushed to attack it with loud words of abuse. She was cross and grumbling from morning till night. And often she raised such an outcry that passers-by stopped in the street.

She was not affectionate towards the old man, reviling him as a lazy-bones and a plague. He was not a responsible, reliable peasant, and perhaps if she had not been continually nagging at him he would not have worked at all, but would have simply sat

pood. . . . Well and go
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I see the village elder,
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"What vodka does!
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As it was a holiday, th
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drinking it for a long tim
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drinking, and after it beg
the herring's head, all hel
bowl. But the herring it

In the evening a potte

for baking pots was lighted, too, and the girls sang songs, and in the distance the singing sounded soft and musical. The peasants were noisy in and about the tavern. They were singing with drunken voices, each on his own account, and swearing at one another, so that Olga could only shudder and say:

"Oh, holy Saints!"

She was amazed that the abuse was incessant, and those who were loudest and most persistent in this foul language were the old men who were so near their end. And the girls and children heard the swearing, and were not in the least disturbed by it, and it was evident that they were used to it from their cradles.

It was past midnight, the kilns on both sides of the river were put out, but in the meadow below and in the tavern the merrymaking still went on. The old father and Kiryak, both drunk, walking arm-in-arm and jostling against each other's shoulders, went to the barn where Olga and Marya were lying.

"Let her alone," the old man persuaded him; "let her alone. . . . She is a harmless woman. . . . It's a sin. . . ."

"Ma-arya!" shouted Kiryak.

"Let her be. . . . It's a sin. . . . She is not a bad woman."

Both stopped by the barn and went on.

"I lo-ove the flowers of the fi-ield," the old man began singing suddenly in a high, piercing tenor. "I lo-ove to gather them in the meadows!"

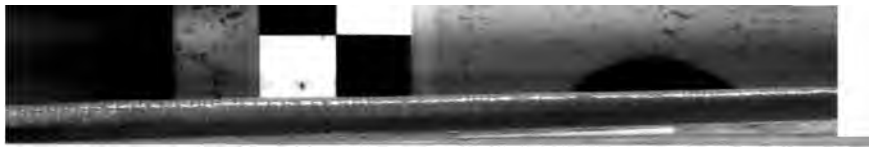
Then he spat, and with a filthy oath went into the hut.

IV

Granny put Sasha by her kitchen-garden and told her to keep watch that the geese did not go in. It was a hot August day. The tavernkeeper's geese could make their way into the kitchen-garden by the backs of the huts, but now they were busily engaged picking up oats by the tavern, peacefully conversing together, and only the gander craned his head high as though trying to see whether the old woman were coming with her stick. The other geese might come up from below, but they were now grazing far away the other side of the river, stretched out in a long white garland about the meadow. Sasha stood about a little, grew weary, and, seeing that the geese were not coming, went away to the ravine.

There she saw Marya's eldest daughter Motka, who was standing motionless on a big stone, staring at the church. Marya had given birth to thirteen children, but she only had six living, all girls, not one boy, and the eldest was eight. Motka in a long smock was standing barefooted in the full sunshine; the sun was blazing down right on her head, but she did not notice that, and seemed as though turned to stone. Sasha stood beside her and said, looking at the church:

"God lives in the church. Men have lamps and candles, but God has little green and red and blue lamps like little eyes. At night God walks about the church, and with Him the Holy Mother of God and Saint Nikolay, thud, thud, thud! . . . And the



watchman is terrified, terrified! Aye, aye, dearie," she added, imitating her mother. "And when the end of the world comes all the churches will be carried up to heaven."

"With the-ir be-ells?" Motka asked in her deep voice, drawling every syllable.

"With their bells. And when the end of the world comes the good will go to Paradise, but the angry will burn in fire eternal and unquenchable, dearie. To my mother as well as to Marya God will say: 'You never offended anyone, and for that go to the right to Paradise'; but to Kiryak and Granny He will say: 'You go to the left into the fire.' And anyone who has eaten meat in Lent will go into the fire, too."

She looked upwards at the sky, opening wide her eyes, and said:

"Look at the sky without winking, you will see angels."

Motka began looking at the sky, too, and a minute passed in silence.

"Do you see them?" asked Sasha.

"I don't," said Motka in her deep voice.

"But I do. Little angels are flying about the sky and flap, flap with their little wings as though they were gnats."

Motka thought for a little, with her eyes on the ground, and asked:

"Will Granny burn?"

"She will, dearie."

From the stone an even gentle slope ran down to the bottom, covered with soft green grass, which one

At that moment th
Oh, how awful it
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was crying on a de

"Holy Saints!" cried Olga, aghast, as the two came into the hut. "Queen of Heaven!"

Sasha began telling her story, while at the same time Granny walked in with a storm of shrill cries and abuse; then Fyokla flew into a rage, and there was an uproar in the hut.

"Never mind, never mind!" Olga, pale and upset, tried to comfort them, stroking Sasha's head. "She is your grandmother; it's a sin to be angry with her. Never mind, my child."

Nikolay, who was worn out already by the everlasting hubbub, hunger, stifling fumes, filth, who hated and despised the poverty, who was ashamed for his wife and daughter to see his father and mother, swung his legs off the stove and said in an irritable, tearful voice, addressing his mother:

"You must not beat her! You have no right to beat her!"

"You lie rotting on the stove, you wretched creature!" Fyokla shouted at him spitefully. "The devil brought you all on us, eating us out of house and home."

Sasha and Motka and all the little girls in the hut huddled on the stove in the corner behind Nikolay's back, and from that refuge listened in silent terror, and the beating of their little hearts could be distinctly heard. Whenever there is someone in a family who has long been ill, and hopelessly ill, there come painful moments when all timidly, secretly, at the bottom of their hearts long for his death; and only the children fear the death of someone near

them, and always feel horrified at the thought of it. And now the children, with bated breath, with a mournful look on their faces, gazed at Nikolay and thought that he was soon to die; and they wanted to cry and to say something friendly and compassionate to him.

He pressed close to Olga, as though seeking protection, and said to her softly in a quavering voice:

"Olya darling, I can't stay here longer. It's more than I can bear. For God's sake, for Christ's sake, write to your sister Klavdia Abramovna. Let her sell and pawn everything she has; let her send us the money. We will go away from here. Oh, Lord," he went on miserably, "to have one peep at Moscow! If I could see it in my dreams, the dear place!"

And when the evening came on, and it was dark in the hut, it was so dismal that it was hard to utter a word. Granny, very ill-tempered, soaked some crusts of rye bread in a cup, and was a long time, a whole hour, sucking at them. Marya, after milking the cow, brought in a pail of milk and set it on a bench; then Granny poured it from the pail into a jug just as slowly and deliberately, evidently pleased that it was now the Fast of the Assumption, so that no one would drink milk and it would be left untouched. And she only poured out a very little in a saucer for Fyokla's baby. When Marya and she carried the jug down to the cellar Motka suddenly stirred, clambered down from the stove, and going to the bench where stood the wooden cup full of crusts, sprinkled into it some milk from the saucer.

Granny, coming back into the hut, sat down to her soaked crusts again, while Sasha and Motka, sitting on the stove, gazed at her, and they were glad that she had broken her fast and now would go to hell. They were comforted and lay down to sleep, and Sasha as she dozed off to sleep imagined the Day of Judgment: a huge fire was burning, somewhat like a potter's kiln, and the Evil One, with horns like a cow's, and black all over, was driving Granny into the fire with a long stick, just as Granny herself had been driving the geese.

V

On the day of the Feast of the Assumption, between ten and eleven in the evening, the girls and lads who were merrymaking in the meadow suddenly raised a clamour and outcry, and ran in the direction of the village; and those who were above on the edge of the ravine could not for the first moment make out what was the matter.

"Fire! Fire!" they heard desperate shouts from below. "The village is on fire!"

Those who were sitting above looked round, and a terrible and extraordinary spectacle met their eyes. On the thatched roof of one of the end cottages stood a column of flame, seven feet high, which curled round and scattered sparks in all directions as though it were a fountain. And all at once the whole roof burst into bright flame, and the crackling of the fire was audible.

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Marya was fussi
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They began ringing the bells in the church on the other side of the river.

Near the burning hut it was hot and so light that one could distinctly see every blade of grass. Semyon, a red-haired peasant with a long nose, wearing a reefer-jacket and a cap pulled down right over his ears, sat on one of the boxes which they had succeeded in bringing out: his wife was lying on her face, moaning and unconscious. A little old man of eighty, with a big beard, who looked like a gnome — not one of the villagers, though obviously connected in some way with the fire — walked about bareheaded, with a white bundle in his arms. The glare was reflected on his bald head. The village elder, Antip Syedelnikov, as swarthy and black-haired as a gypsy, went up to the hut with an axe, and hacked out the windows one after another — no one knew why — then began chopping up the roof.

"Women, water!" he shouted. "Bring the engine! Look sharp!"

The peasants, who had been drinking in the tavern just before, dragged the engine up. They were all drunk; they kept stumbling and falling down, and all had a helpless expression and tears in their eyes.

"Wenches, water!" shouted the elder, who was drunk, too. "Look sharp, wenches!"

The women and the girls ran downhill to where there was a spring, and kept hauling pails and buckets of water up the hill, and, pouring it into the engine, ran down again. Olga and Marya and Sasha and Motka all brought water. The women and the boys pumped the water; the pipe hissed, and

the elder, directing it now at the door, now at the windows, held back the stream with his finger, which made it hiss more sharply still.

"Bravo, Antip!" voices shouted approvingly. "Do your best."

Antip went inside the hut into the fire and shouted from within.

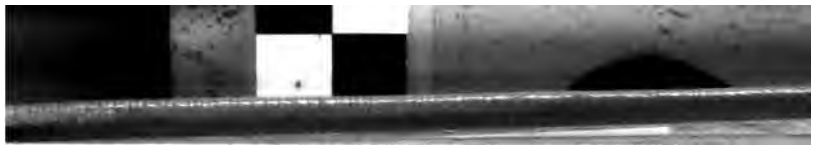
"Pump! Bestir yourselves, good Christian folk, in such a terrible mischance!"

The peasants stood round in a crowd, doing nothing but staring at the fire. No one knew what to do, no one had the sense to do anything, though there were stacks of wheat, hay, barns, and piles of faggots standing all round. Kiryak and old Osip, his father, both tipsy, were standing there, too. And as though to justify his doing nothing, old Osip said, addressing the woman who lay on the ground:

"What is there to trouble about, old girl! The hut is insured — why are you taking on?"

Semyon, addressing himself first to one person and then to another, kept describing how the fire had started.

"That old man, the one with the bundle, a house-serf of General Zhukov's. . . . He was cook at our general's, God rest his soul! He came over this evening: 'Let me stay the night,' says he. . . . Well, we had a glass, to be sure. . . . The wife got the samovar — she was going to give the old fellow a cup of tea, and in an unlucky hour she set the samovar in the entrance. The sparks from the chimney must have blown straight up to the thatch; that's how it was. We were almost burnt ourselves.



And the old fellow's cap has been burnt; what a shame!"

And the sheet of iron was struck indefatigably, and the bells kept ringing in the church the other side of the river. In the glow of the fire Olga, breathless, looking with horror at the red sheep and the pink doves flying in the smoke, kept running down the hill and up again. It seemed to her that the ringing went to her heart with a sharp stab, that the fire would never be over, that Sasha was lost. . . . And when the ceiling of the hut fell in with a crash, the thought that now the whole village would be burnt made her weak and faint, and she could not go on fetching water, but sat down on the ravine, setting the pail down near her; beside her and below her, the peasant women sat wailing as though at a funeral.

Then the stewards and watchmen from the estate the other side of the river arrived in two carts, bringing with them a fire-engine. A very young student in an unbuttoned white tunic rode up on horseback. There was the thud of axes. They put a ladder to the burning framework of the house, and five men ran up it at once. Foremost of them all was the student, who was red in the face and shouting in a harsh hoarse voice, and in a tone as though putting out fires was a thing he was used to. They pulled the house to pieces, a beam at a time; they dragged away the corn, the hurdles, and the stacks that were near.

"Don't let them break it up!" cried stern voices in the crowd. "Don't let them."

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but were smoking
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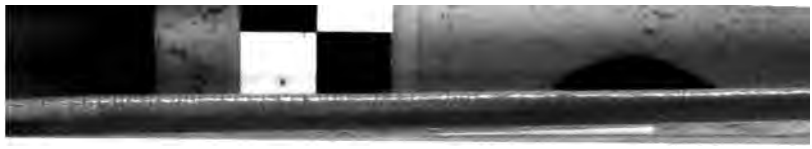
Moscow: there we ha



Slavyansky Bazaar. And this is my daughter," she said, indicating Sasha, who was cold and huddling up to her. "She is a Moscow girl, too."

The two young ladies said something in French to the student, and he gave Sasha a twenty-kopeck piece.

Old Father Osip saw this, and there was a gleam of hope in his face.

"We must thank God, your honour, there was no wind," he said, addressing the student, "or else we should have been all burnt up together. Your honour, kind gentlefolks," he added in embarrassment in a lower tone, "the morning's chilly . . . something to warm one . . . half a bottle to your honour's health."

Nothing was given him, and clearing his throat he slouched home. Olga stood afterwards at the end of the street and watched the two carts crossing the river by the ford and the gentlefolks walking across the meadow; a carriage was waiting for them the other side of the river. Going into the hut, she described to her husband with enthusiasm:

"Such good people! And so beautiful! The young ladies were like cherubim."

"Plague take them!" Fyokla, sleepy, said spitefully.

VI

Marya thought herself unhappy, and said that she would be very glad to die; Fyokla, on the other hand, found all this life to her taste: the poverty, the uncleanliness, and the incessant quarrelling.

She ate what was given her without discrimination; slept anywhere, on whatever came to hand. She would empty the slops just at the porch, would splash them out from the doorway, and then walk barefoot through the puddle. And from the very first day she took a dislike to Olga and Nikolay just because they did not like this life.

"We shall see what you'll find to eat here, you Moscow gentry!" she said malignantly. "We shall see!"

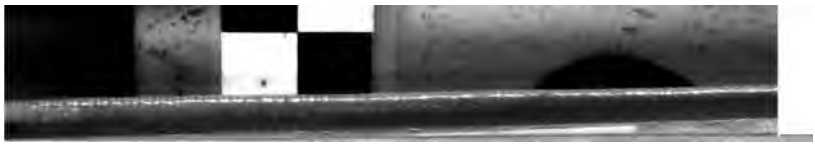
One morning, it was at the beginning of September, Fyokla, vigorous, good-looking, and rosy from the cold, brought up two pails of water; Marya and Olga were sitting meanwhile at the table drinking tea.

"Tea and sugar," said Fyokla sarcastically. "The fine ladies!" she added, setting down the pails. "You have taken to the fashion of tea every day. You better look out that you don't burst with your tea-drinking," she went on, looking with hatred at Olga. "That's how you have come by your fat mug, having a good time in Moscow, you lump of flesh!" She swung the yoke and hit Olga such a blow on the shoulder that the two sisters-in-law could only clasp their hands and say:

"Oh, holy Saints!"

Then Fyokla went down to the river to wash the clothes, swearing all the time so loudly that she could be heard in the hut.

The day passed and was followed by the long autumn evening. They wound silk in the hut; everyone did it except Fyokla; she had gone over the



river. They got the silk from a factory close by, and the whole family working together earned next to nothing, twenty kopecks a week.

"Things were better in the old days under the gentry," said the old father as he wound silk. "You worked and ate and slept, everything in its turn. At dinner you had cabbage-soup and boiled grain, and at supper the same again. Cucumbers and cabbage in plenty: you could eat to your heart's content, as much as you wanted. And there was more strictness. Everyone minded what he was about."

The hut was lighted by a single little lamp, which burned dimly and smoked. When someone screened the lamp and a big shadow fell across the window, the bright moonlight could be seen. Old Osip, speaking slowly, told them how they used to live before the emancipation; how in those very parts, where life was now so poor and so dreary, they used to hunt with harriers, greyhounds, retrievers, and when they went out as beaters the peasants were given vodka; how whole waggonloads of game used to be sent to Moscow for the young masters; how the bad were beaten with rods or sent away to the Tver estate, while the good were rewarded. And Granny told them something, too. She remembered everything, positively everything. She described her mistress, a kind, God-fearing woman, whose husband was a profligate and a rake, and all of whose daughters made unlucky marriages: one married a drunkard, another married a workman, the other eloped secretly (Granny herself, at

that time a young girl, helped in the elopement), and they had all three as well as their mother died early from grief. And remembering all this, Granny positively began to shed tears.

All at once someone knocked at the door, and they all started.

"Uncle Osip, give me a night's lodging."

The little bald old man, General Zhukov's cook, the one whose cap had been burnt, walked in. He sat down and listened, then he, too, began telling stories of all sorts. Nikolay, sitting on the stove with his legs hanging down, listened and asked questions about the dishes that were prepared in the old days for the gentry. They talked of rissoles, cutlets, various soups and sauces, and the cook, who remembered everything very well, mentioned dishes that are no longer served. There was one, for instance — a dish made of bulls' eyes, which was called "waking up in the morning."

"And used you to do cutlets *à la maréchal?*" asked Nikolay.

"No."

Nikolay shook his head reproachfully and said:

"Tut, tut! You were not much of a cook!"

The little girls sitting and lying on the stove stared down without blinking; it seemed as though there were a great many of them, like cherubim in the clouds. They liked the stories: they were breathless; they shuddered and turned pale with alternate rapture and terror, and they listened breathlessly, afraid to stir, to Granny, whose stories were the most interesting of all.

They lay down to sleep in silence; and the old people, troubled and excited by their reminiscences, thought how precious was youth, of which, whatever it might have been like, nothing was left in the memory but what was living, joyful, touching, and how terribly cold was death, which was not far off, better not think of it! The lamp died down. And the dusk, and the two little windows sharply defined by the moonlight, and the stillness and the creak of the cradle, reminded them for some reason that life was over, that nothing one could do would bring it back. . . . You doze off, you forget yourself, and suddenly someone touches your shoulder or breathes on your cheek — and sleep is gone; your body feels cramped, and thoughts of death keep creeping into your mind. You turn on the other side: death is forgotten, but old dreary, sickening thoughts of poverty, of food, of how dear flour is getting, stray through the mind, and a little later again you remember that life is over and you cannot bring it back. . . .

"Oh, Lord!" sighed the cook.

Someone gave a soft, soft tap at the window. It must be Fyokla come back. Olga got up, and yawning and whispering a prayer, opened the door, then drew the bolt in the outer room, but no one came in; only from the street came a cold draught and a sudden brightness from the moonlight. The street, still and deserted, and the moon itself floating across the sky, could be seen at the open door.

"Who is there?" called Olga.

"I," she heard the answer —"it is I."

Near the door, crouching against the wall, stood Fyokla, absolutely naked. She was shivering with cold, her teeth were chattering, and in the bright moonlight she looked very pale, strange, and beautiful. The shadows on her, and the bright moonlight on her skin, stood out vividly, and her dark eyebrows and firm, youthful bosom were defined with peculiar distinctness.

"The ruffians over there undressed me and turned me out like this," she said. "I've come home without my clothes . . . naked as my mother bore me. Bring me something to put on."

"But go inside!" Olga said softly, beginning to shiver, too.

"I don't want the old folks to see." Granny was, in fact, already stirring and muttering, and the old father asked: "Who is there?" Olga brought her own smock and skirt, dressed Fyokla, and then both went softly into the inner room, trying not to make a noise with the door.

"Is that you, you sleek one?" Granny grumbled angrily, guessing who it was. "Fie upon you, night-walker! . . . Bad luck to you!"

"It's all right, it's all right," whispered Olga, wrapping Fyokla up; "it's all right, dearie."

All was stillness again. They always slept badly; everyone was kept awake by something worrying and persistent: the old man by the pain in his back, Granny by anxiety and anger, Marya by terror, the children by itch and hunger. Now, too, their sleep was troubled; they kept turning over from one side

to the other, talking in their sleep, getting up for a drink.

Fyokla suddenly broke into a loud, coarse howl, but immediately checked herself, and only uttered sobs from time to time, growing softer and on a lower note, until she relapsed into silence. From time to time from the other side of the river there floated the sound of the beating of the hours; but the time seemed somehow strange — five was struck and then three.

"Oh Lord!" sighed the cook.

Looking at the windows, it was difficult to tell whether it was still moonlight or whether the dawn had begun. Marya got up and went out, and she could be heard milking the cows and saying, "Stea-dy!" Granny went out, too. It was still dark in the hut, but all the objects in it could be discerned.

Nikolay, who had not slept all night, got down from the stove. He took his dress-coat out of a green box, put it on, and going to the window, stroked the sleeves and took hold of the coat-tails — and smiled. Then he carefully took off the coat, put it away in his box, and lay down again.

Marya came in again and began lighting the stove. She was evidently hardly awake, and seemed dropping asleep as she walked. Probably she had had some dream, or the stories of the night before came into her mind as, stretching luxuriously before the stove, she said:

"No, freedom is better."

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When Osip came into the village elder's hut with his tax book, the police inspector, a lean old man with a long grey beard, in a grey tunic, was sitting at a table in the passage, writing something. It was clean in the hut; all the walls were dotted with pictures cut out of the illustrated papers, and in the most conspicuous place near the ikon there was a portrait of the Battenburg who was the Prince of Bulgaria. By the table stood Antip Syedelnikov with his arms folded.

"There is one hundred and nineteen roubles standing against him," he said when it came to Osip's turn. "Before Easter he paid a rouble, and he has not paid a kopeck since."

The police inspector raised his eyes to Osip and asked:

"Why is this, brother?"

"Show Divine mercy, your honour," Osip began, growing agitated. "Allow me to say last year the gentleman at Lutorydsky said to me, 'Osip,' he said, 'sell your hay . . . you sell it,' he said. Well, I had a hundred poods for sale; the women mowed it on the water-meadow. Well, we struck a bargain all right, willingly. . . ."

He complained of the elder, and kept turning round to the peasants as though inviting them to bear witness; his face flushed red and perspired, and his eyes grew sharp and angry.

"I don't know why you are saying all this," said the police inspector. "I am asking you . . . I am asking you why you don't pay your arrears. You

said to Osip
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"Good Christians and believers in God! Neighbours, they have ill-treated me! Kind friends, they have oppressed me! Oh, oh! dear people, take my part."

"Granny, Granny!" said the village elder sternly, "have some sense in your head!"

It was hopelessly dreary in the Tchikildyeevs' hut without the samovar; there was something humiliating in this loss, insulting, as though the honour of the hut had been outraged. Better if the elder had carried off the table, all the benches, all the pots — it would not have seemed so empty. Granny screamed, Marya cried, and the little girls, looking at her, cried, too. The old father, feeling guilty, sat in the corner with bowed head and said nothing. And Nikolay, too, was silent. Granny loved him and was sorry for him, but now, forgetting her pity, she fell upon him with abuse, with reproaches, shaking her fist right in his face. She shouted that it was all his fault; why had he sent them so little when he boasted in his letters that he was getting fifty roubles a month at the Slavyansky Bazaar? Why had he come, and with his family, too? If he died, where was the money to come from for his funeral . . . ? And it was pitiful to look at Nikolay, Olga, and Sasha.

The old father cleared his throat, took his cap, and went off to the village elder. Antip was soldering something by the stove, puffing out his cheeks; there was a smell of burning. His children, emaciated and unwashed, no better than the Tchikildyeevs, were scrambling about the floor; his wife, an ugly,

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a sin to work, but talked in the darkness. There were some items of news, all rather unpleasant. In two or three households hens had been taken for the arrears, and had been sent to the district police station, and there they had died because no one had fed them; they had taken sheep, and while they were being driven away tied to one another, shifted into another cart at each village, one of them had died. And now they were discussing the question, who was to blame?

"The Zemstvo," said Osip. "Who else?"

"Of course it is the Zemstvo."

The Zemstvo was blamed for everything — for the arrears, and for the oppressions, and for the failure of the crops, though no one of them knew what was meant by the Zemstvo. And this dated from the time when well-to-do peasants who had factories, shops, and inns of their own were members of the Zemstvos, were dissatisfied with them, and took to swearing at the Zemstvos in their factories and inns.

They talked of God's not sending the snow; they had to bring in wood for fuel, and there was no driving nor walking in the frozen ruts. In old days fifteen to twenty years ago conversation was much more interesting in Zhukovo. In those days every old man looked as though he were treasuring some secret; as though he knew something and was expecting something. They used to talk about an edict in golden letters, about the division of lands, about new land, about treasures; they hinted at something. Now the people of Zhukovo had no

ry at all; their whole life was bare and open
sight of all, and they could talk of nothing but
ty, food, there being no snow yet. . . .
ere was a pause. Then they thought again of
ens, of the sheep, and began discussing whose
it was.
The Zemstvo," said Osip wearily. "Who
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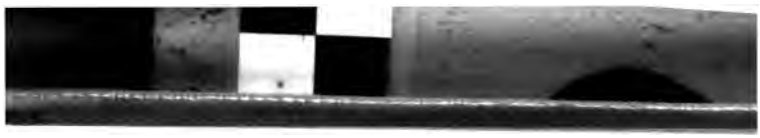
VIII

e parish church was nearly five miles away
osogorovo, and the peasants only attended it
they had to do so for baptisms, weddings, or
als; they went to the services at the church
s the river. On holidays in fine weather the
dressed up in their best and went in a crowd
her to church, and it was a cheering sight to
em in their red, yellow, and green dresses cross



hazy; everything was mixed up in her memory, and she could scarcely begin to think of sins, of death, of the salvation of the soul, before poverty and her daily cares took possession of her mind, and she instantly forgot what she was thinking about. She did not remember the prayers, and usually in the evenings, before lying down to sleep, she would stand before the ikons and whisper:

"Holy Mother of Kazan, Holy Mother of Smolensk, Holy Mother of Troerutchitsy. . . ."

Marya and Fyokla crossed themselves, fasted, and took the sacrament every year, but understood nothing. The children were not taught their prayers, nothing was told them about God, and no moral principles were instilled into them; they were only forbidden to eat meat or milk in Lent. In the other families it was much the same: there were few who believed, few who understood. At the same time everyone loved the Holy Scripture, loved it with a tender, reverent love; but they had no Bible, there was no one to read it and explain it, and because Olga sometimes read them the gospel, they respected her, and they all addressed her and Sasha as though they were superior to themselves.

For church holidays and services Olga often went to neighbouring villages, and to the district town, in which there were two monasteries and twenty-seven churches. She was dreamy, and when she was on these pilgrimages she quite forgot her family, and only when she got home again suddenly made the joyful discovery that she had a husband and daughter, and then would say, smiling and radiant:

"God has sent me blessings!"

What went on in the village worried her and seemed to her revolting. On Elijah's Day they drank, at the Assumption they drank, at the Ascension they drank. The Feast of the Intercession was the parish holiday for Zhukovo, and the peasants used to drink then for three days; they squandered on drink fifty roubles of money belonging to the Mir, and then collected more for vodka from all the households. On the first day of the feast the Tchikildyeevs killed a sheep and ate of it in the morning, at dinner-time, and in the evening; they ate it ravenously, and the children got up at night to eat more. Kiryak was fearfully drunk for three whole days; he drank up everything, even his boots and cap, and beat Marya so terribly that they had to pour water over her. And then they were all ashamed and sick.

However, even in Zhukovo, in this "Slavey-town," there was once an outburst of genuine religious enthusiasm. It was in August, when throughout the district they carried from village to village the Holy Mother, the giver of life. It was still and overcast on the day when they expected *Her* at Zhukovo. The girls set off in the morning to meet the ikon, in their bright holiday dresses, and brought Her towards the evening, in procession with the cross and with singing, while the bells pealed in the church across the river. An immense crowd of villagers and strangers flooded the street; there was noise, dust, a great crush. . . . And the old father and Granny and Kiryak — all stretched out their

hands to the ikon, looked eagerly at it and said, weeping:

"Defender! Mother! Defender!"

All seemed suddenly to realize that there was not an empty void between earth and heaven, that the rich and the powerful had not taken possession of everything, that there was still a refuge from injury, from slavish bondage, from crushing, unendurable poverty, from the terrible vodka.

"Defender! Mother!" sobbed Marya. "Mother!"

But the thanksgiving service ended and the ikon was carried away, and everything went on as before; and again there was a sound of coarse drunken oaths from the tavern.

Only the well-to-do peasants were afraid of death; the richer they were the less they believed in God, and in the salvation of souls, and only through fear of the end of the world put up candles and had services said for them, to be on the safe side. The peasants who were rather poorer were not afraid of death. The old father and Granny were told to their faces that they had lived too long, that it was time they were dead, and they did not mind. They did not hinder Fyokla from saying in Nikolay's presence that when Nikolay died her husband Denis would get exemption — to return home from the army. And Marya, far from fearing death, regretted that it was so slow in coming, and was glad when her children died.

Death they did not fear, but of every disease they had an exaggerated terror. The merest trifle was

enough — a stomach upset, a slight chill, and Granny would be wrapped up on the stove, and would begin moaning loudly and incessantly:

"I am dy-ing!"

The old father hurried off for the priest, and Granny received the sacrament and extreme unction. They often talked of colds, of worms, of tumours which move in the stomach and coil round to the heart. Above all, they were afraid of catching cold, and so put on thick clothes even in the summer and warmed themselves at the stove. Granny was fond of being doctored, and often went to the hospital, where she used to say she was not seventy, but fifty-eight; she supposed that if the doctor knew her real age he would not treat her, but would say it was time she died instead of taking medicine. She usually went to the hospital early in the morning, taking with her two or three of the little girls, and came back in the evening, hungry and ill-tempered — with drops for herself and ointments for the little girls. Once she took Nikolay, who swallowed drops for a fortnight afterwards, and said he felt better.

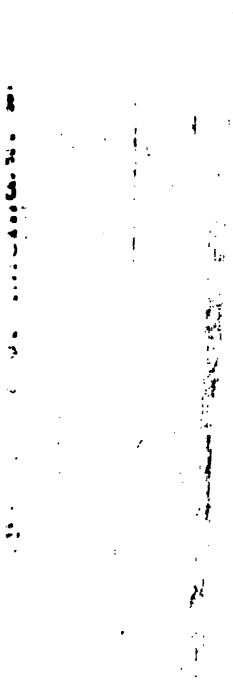
Granny knew all the doctors and their assistants and the wise men for twenty miles round, and not one of them she liked. At the Intercession, when the priest made the round of the huts with the cross, the deacon told her that in the town near the prison lived an old man who had been a medical orderly in the army, and who made wonderful cures, and advised her to try him. Granny took his advice. When the first snow fell she drove to

the town and fetched an old man with a big beard, a converted Jew, in a long gown, whose face was covered with blue veins. There were outsiders at work in the hut at the time: an old tailor, in terrible spectacles, was cutting a waistcoat out of some rags, and two young men were making felt boots out of wool; Kiryak, who had been dismissed from his place for drunkenness, and now lived at home, was sitting beside the tailor mending a bridle. And it was crowded, stifling, and noisome in the hut. The converted Jew examined Nikolay and said that it was necessary to try cupping.

He put on the cups, and the old tailor, Kiryak, and the little girls stood round and looked on, and it seemed to them that they saw the disease being drawn out of Nikolay; and Nikolay, too, watched how the cups suckling at his breast gradually filled with dark blood, and felt as though there really were something coming out of him, and smiled with pleasure.

"It's a good thing," said the tailor. "Please God, it will do you good."

The Jew put on twelve cups and then another twelve, drank some tea, and went away. Nikolay began shivering; his face looked drawn, and, as the women expressed it, shrank up like a fist; his fingers turned blue. He wrapped himself up in a quilt and in a sheepskin, but got colder and colder. Towards the evening he began to be in great distress; asked to be laid on the ground, asked the tailor not to smoke; then he subsided under the sheepskin and towards morning he died.



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cries, as though they were calling themselves. Standing on the edge of the ravine, Olga looked a long time at the flooded meadow, at the sunshine, at the bright church, that looked as though it had grown younger; and her tears flowed and her breath came in gasps from her passionate longing to go away, to go far away to the end of the world. It was already settled that she should go back to Moscow to be a servant, and that Kiryak should set off with her to get a job as a porter or something. Oh, to get away quickly!

As soon as it dried up and grew warm they got ready to set off. Olga and Sasha, with wallets on their backs and shoes of plaited bark on their feet, came out before daybreak: Marya came out, too, to see them on their way. Kiryak was not well, and was kept at home for another week. For the last time Olga prayed at the church and thought of her husband, and though she did not shed tears, her face puckered up and looked ugly like an old woman's. During the winter she had grown thinner and plainer, and her hair had gone a little grey, and instead of the old look of sweetness and the pleasant smile on her face, she had the resigned, mournful expression left by the sorrows she had been through, and there was something blank and irresponsive in her eyes, as though she did not hear what was said. She was sorry to part from the village and the peasants. She remembered how they had carried out Nikolay, and how a requiem had been ordered for him at almost every hut, and all had shed tears in sympathy with her grief. In

ourse of the summer and the winter there had
hours and days when it seemed as though these
le lived worse than the beasts, and to live with
was terrible; they were coarse, dishonest,
, and drunken; they did not live in harmony,
quarrelled continually, because they distrusted
feared and did not respect one another. Who
s the tavern and makes the people drunken? A
ant. Who wastes and spends on drink the funds
e commune, of the schools, of the church? A
ant. Who stole from his neighbours, set fire
eir property, gave false witness at the court
a bottle of vodka? At the meetings of the
stvo and other local bodies, who was the first
ll foul of the peasants? A peasant. Yes, to
with them was terrible; but yet, they were hu-
beings, they suffered and wept like human be-

to insult, to despoil, and to terrorize? Olga remembered the pitiful, humiliated look of the old people when in the winter Kiryak had been taken to be flogged. . . . And now she felt sorry for all these people, painfully so, and as she walked on she kept looking back at the huts.

After walking two miles with them Marya said good-bye, then kneeling, and falling forward with her face on the earth, she began wailing:

"Again I am left alone. Alas, for poor me! poor, unhappy! . . ."

And she wailed like this for a long time, and for a long way Olga and Sasha could still see her on her knees, bowing down to someone at the side and clutching her head in her hands, while the rooks flew over her head.

The sun rose high; it began to get hot. Zhukovo was left far behind. Walking was pleasant. Olga and Sasha soon forgot both the village and Marya; they were gay and everything entertained them. Now they came upon an ancient barrow, now upon a row of telegraph posts running one after another into the distance and disappearing into the horizon, and the wires hummed mysteriously. Then they saw a homestead, all wreathed in green foliage; there came a scent from it of dampness, of hemp, and it seemed for some reason that happy people lived there. Then they came upon a horse's skeleton whitening in solitude in the open fields. And the larks trilled unceasingly, the corncrakes called to one another, and the landrail cried as though someone were really scraping at an old iron rail.

t midday Olga and Sasha reached a big village. re in the broad street they met the little old who was General Zhukov's cook. He was hot, his red, perspiring bald head shone in the sun- e. Olga and he did not recognize each other, looked round at the same moment, recognized other, and went their separate ways without ng a word. Stopping near the hut which looked st and most prosperous, Olga bowed down be- the open windows, and said in a loud, thin, ting voice:

Good Christian folk, give alms, for Christ's , that God's blessing may be upon you, and that parents may be in the Kingdom of Heaven in e eternal."

Good Christian folk," Sasha began chanting, e, for Christ's sake, that God's blessing, the

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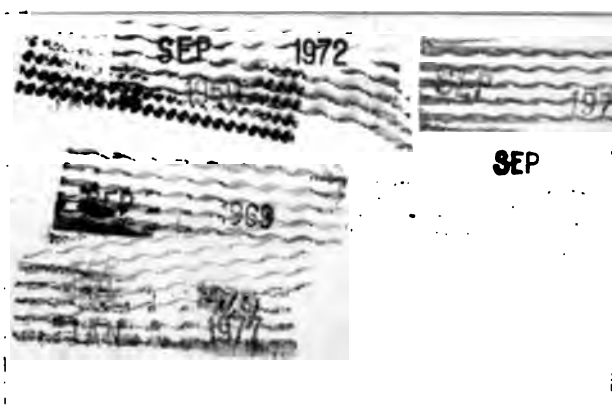
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